

SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION TO ESTABLISH A 3-11 SEEDLING WELSH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MONMOUTH

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 7th June 2023

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with the outcome of the recent consultation exercise regarding the Authority's intention to establish an 3-11 Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site.
- 1.2 This report presents the consultation report to Cabinet and seeks their approval to proceed to the next stage i.e., the publication of statutory notices.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 For members to agree to publish statutory notices in line with School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to establish a 3-11 Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site with effect from 1st September 2024. Statutory notices will be published on the 19th June 2023 for a period of 28 days ending on the 17th July 2023.

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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4** 106 of 145 respondents (73%) supported the proposal, many of which felt that it was important that Welsh-medium education was available in Monmouth and parents had the same choice as other parts of the County. Section 6.1 of the consultation report (page 15) provides a detailed summary of the comments / questions that were received from those in favour of the proposals.
- 3.5** 39 of the 145 respondents (27%) did not support the proposal with many feeling that investment is needed in the English-medium schools within the area and that the demand for Welsh-medium education is not high enough to justify the amount of money being spent especially during the current financial crisis. Section 6.1 of the consultation report (page 17) provides a detailed summary of the comments / questions that were received from those not in favour of the proposals.
- 3.6** Pupils currently receiving free home to school transport to existing provision who will be residing in the catchment area for the seedling school will not lose their entitlement to free home to school transport. However following feedback from the consultation families are concerned about having their children in two different schools and if they choose Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni for all children they will not receive free home to school transport. This is something that needs further consideration as part of the decision-making process.
- 3.7** Some respondents were concerned about the school being on the same site as an English-medium school and the impact this would have on full immersion. They felt that the council needed to recognise that this was not a permanent solution and the school needed to have its own site in the future and the longer-term plans needed to be clarified.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1** The revised Code 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 in the consultation document have been undertaken and is provided below:

- 4.2** Option 1 – Do nothing and maintain the status quo. This would mean there would be no change to existing provision. Following the consultation period there were only a small number of respondents that felt there was not a need to establish Welsh-medium provision in Monmouth. This was largely due to their belief that there is insufficient demand in the area and that the other schools required further investment. The Council has considered the responses and maintains the view that there is a need to have a third Welsh-medium school in Monmouth which supports the targets in our Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP).
- 4.3** Option 2 – Build a new Welsh medium Community Primary school on a new site in the Monmouth area to include early years and childcare provision. There were some respondents that felt a new school in the town would be more beneficial, however there are still no suitable building sites available in Monmouth. In addition, planning permission would not be granted due to the lack of an identified strategic solution to the treatment of phosphates at the Monmouth Wastewater Treatment Works.
- 4.4** Option 3 – Utilise Osbaston CIW primary school site in Monmouth to create additional Welsh-medium primary provision and bilingual childcare. The Council maintains the view that this is not a viable option. The space on the site is limited, both internally and externally and may not be sufficient for two schools. The Osbaston Junior site has extremely limited parking space for staff, visitors, and home to school transport. Increasing the number of staff and pupils using this building would result in additional pressure being put on already insufficient space for pupils. There is a high likelihood that this increase will push into an already busy road. There would be legalities to consider with regards to the ownership and there is a high risk of flooding on the site.
- 4.5** Option 4 – Utilise the former Raglan junior school building to create Welsh-medium primary provision and build a new Welsh medium early years and childcare provision on the site. Many of the respondents felt this was the best option due to the fact the school would have its own site which would support full immersion. They also felt Raglan was a more suitable location as it is central for all pupils within the catchment area.

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

- 4.6** Option 5 – Utilise existing accommodation available on the Overmonnow Primary School site to establish a seedling Welsh-medium primary school and early years and childcare

provision. As mentioned above the Council maintains the view that this is the preferred option it is important that Welsh-medium provision is available in the town of Monmouth where more pupils can access Welsh-medium education within walking distance to their home.

4.7 The statutory code provides us with a range of potential options for future action at this juncture:

- (a) to publish the proposals as consulted on.
- (b) to publish the proposals with any appropriate modifications.
- (c) to abandon the proposals and retain the status quo; or
- (d) to significantly recast the proposals and re-consult.

Following consideration of the consultation responses we have determined that we will “publish the proposals as consulted on” and proceed with the proposal to establish a 3-11 Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site via a seedling model.

The reasons for this are the central location and proximity to demand, thus mainly reducing the need for young children to travel a distance to school and they are educated in the area that they live, the flexibility and adaptability of the Overmonnow school site to be able to accommodate the school as a separate entity and ensure the immersion required for a Welsh medium School, it will reduce surplus places in the Monmouth town area as required by Welsh Government and fulfil the aspirations of our WESP.

5. REASONS:

5.1 The proposal demonstrates our commitment to increasing the number of children accessing Welsh medium provision and meets our targets outlined in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). It also supports the Welsh Government’s national strategy Cymraeg 2050.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 The initial costs for the Welsh medium primary school are shown below, the costs are for the full year, for the first year the costs will be lower to reflect the final 7 months of the financial year. These costs are included in the current 23/24 budget for CYP.

Staffing costs	£93,203	One full time teacher and one full time teaching assistant for foundation phase. This includes agency costs to cover absence and PPA
Headteacher	£92,886	One teaching headteacher.
Resources	£5,000	
Administration	£5,000	

- 6.2 Overmonnow Primary School is currently fully funded for utilities, maintenance and grounds therefore no additional costs are expected.
- 6.3 The transport costs are expected to be neutral; it is anticipated that any additional costs will be offset by savings of transporting pupils to other Welsh medium primary schools. A decision regarding whether free home to school transport should be provided for younger siblings of existing pupils to Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is yet to be made, costs for this are not available at this time and will be difficult to predict in the future.
- 6.4 As the school increases in size, the costs for each class will be:

Staffing costs	£88,203	One full time teacher and one full time teaching assistant for foundation phase.
Higher Level Teaching Assistant	£9,513	20%
Resources	£2,000	

- 6.5 To set up the Welsh medium primary school the capital costs will be £3,600,000. This includes refurbishment of 3 classrooms, early years, and backlog maintenance, this will be funded via a grant from Welsh Government.

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

Please see attached below.

8. CONSULTEES:

CYP DMT
SLT
Executive Member for Education
Cabinet

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

School Organisation Code (2018)
Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
Consultation feedback
Consultation report

10. AUTHOR:

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11. CONTACT DETAILS:

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<p>Name of the Officer Will Mclean</p> <p>Phone no:</p> <p>E-mail: willmclean@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To establish a Welsh Medium 3-11 seedling primary school in Monmouth.</p>
<p>Name of Service area: CYP Access Unit</p>	<p>Date: January 2023</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.

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	The school will provide Welsh medium education for children aged 3-11 living in Monmouth. Currently pupils have to travel long distances to Abergavenny.	Welsh medium education for children aged 12-19 is not yet available in Monmouthshire	MCC in collaboration with neighbouring authorities in Southeast Wales are looking at potential options across the region
Disability	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Gender reassignment	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact

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?
Marriage or civil partnership	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Pregnancy or maternity	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Race	.No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Religion or Belief	.No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Sex	The provision will be co-educational including boys and girls.	No Impact	No Impact
Sexual Orientation	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

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.

	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 socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>Establishing a new Welsh medium primary school will increase the number of Welsh speakers in Monmouthshire. Being bilingual has many advantages, for example, due to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 the ability to speak Welsh is either an essential or desirable skill for a growing number of jobs such as health, education, leisure, childcare and retail. This is especially the case in the provision of public services where the Welsh Language Standards require local authorities, fire and rescue service and police etc to provide their services to the same standards in both Welsh and English. The expansion of Welsh medium education across Monmouthshire means that more learners will have the opportunity to become bilingual thereby giving them a real advantage in securing employment opportunities</p>	<p>Time, distance and cost of travel has been identified as a challenge for some learners, particularly those suffering from socio economic disadvantage. As a result, Welsh medium education is not a genuine option for some learners. Learners who did not start Welsh medium education in Nursery or Reception have been unable to join in later years.</p> <p>Following feedback from the consultation, the Council recognises that families who already have older siblings attending Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni may want both children to attend the same school and receive home to school transport for all children.</p>	<p>The Local Authority plan to review the School Transport Policy to ensure that it provides learners with a genuine opportunity to have a Welsh medium education. The additional primary school in Monmouth and the development looking at secondary provision in partnership with Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Powys will create potential. This will allow more choice to parents wishing to provide Welsh medium education to their children. The development of an Immersion provision within Monmouthshire means that all learners, irrespective of age or linguistic background, will be able to benefit from a Welsh medium education.</p> <p>This is something that the Council will consider further as part of the consultation process.</p>

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

<p>How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:</p>	<p>Describe the positive impacts of this proposal</p>	<p>Describe the negative impacts of this proposal</p>	<p>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts</p>
<p>Policy Making</p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably</p>	<p>Should the proposal be agreed it will have a positive impact on the Welsh Language as we will be creating a Welsh Medium primary school in Monmouth. This will enable families to access Welsh medium education closer to their home. They will also have access to Welsh medium nursery and childcare. The proposal will significantly promote the Welsh language offer in Monmouth, this links directly with the Council's ambition to support the Cymraeg 2050 strategy of 1 million Welsh speakers and also the targets set out in the Council's Welsh Language 5-year strategy 22-27 and also the targets set in the Councils Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 22-32.</p>	<p>There is a risk that due to the school being on the same site as an English medium school that pupils will not be fully immersed in the Welsh Language.</p> <p>There is currently no Welsh medium secondary provision in Monmouthshire so there will still be long travelling times to Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen.</p>	<p>The headteachers of both schools will work collaboratively to ensure access to shared areas are managed effectively.</p> <p>MCC will continue to develop its discussions and engagement with Powys County Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to secure new Welsh medium secondary provision in the north of Gwent / south Powys area to mitigate the potential negative impact of this proposal.</p> <p>The council's Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) will be kept closely informed and involved in discussions on this.</p> <p>The Council will continue its on-going dialogue with Torfaen County Borough Council regarding the</p>

			provision at Ysgol Gyfyn Gwynllyw so that Welsh medium secondary education at the school remains an attractive option for pupils who wish to receive a wholly immersive Welsh education experience.
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	The establishment of a new school will generate the need for a greater number of Welsh Medium teachers and support staff in the Monmouth area over time. This will create opportunities for Welsh speakers in Monmouthshire and outside of the area to be able to utilise their Welsh language skills in the work environment. Recruitment Will be easier and can be gradually.	There is a risk that we may not be able to secure sufficient Welsh speaking teachers / staff to fulfil the requirements of the new school.	In order to mitigate this risk, we will actively engage closely with our colleagues in the Welsh Government, the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and the local higher education institutes to help facilitate greater numbers of Welsh Medium teachers. We will also use all available recruitment tools at our disposal to aid the recruitment process – social media (twitter, facebook, you tube), council website, bespoke Welsh Medium recruitment sites, LinkedIn etc. We will engage with our partners in the Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) to assist us in this process utilising their expertise and range of contacts
Service delivery	Should the consultation document be agreed it will be distributed to	There is a risk that we will not be able to recruit sufficient Welsh speaking specialist local	To mitigate this risk, we will actively engage closely with colleagues in the Welsh

Use of Welsh language in service delivery	stakeholders in both Welsh and English.	authority staff to deliver all services in Welsh.	Government, and the local higher education institutes to help facilitate greater numbers of Welsh Medium staff. We will also use all available recruitment tools at our disposal to aid the recruitment process – social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube), council website, bespoke Welsh Medium recruitment sites, LinkedIn etc. We will engage with our partners in the Welsh Medium Education Forum (WEF) to assist us in this process utilizing their expertise and range of contacts
Promoting use of the language	All correspondence and communications including on social media in relation to this proposal will be bilingual as required by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011		


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?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The ability to speak Welsh is either an essential or desirable skill for a growing number of jobs such as health, education, leisure, childcare, retail, and public services. This means that more learners will have increased employment opportunities as a result of being Bilingual in Welsh and English. There will be Increased	No impact


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?
	employment opportunities within the proposed new school	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	The establishment of the new school will reduce the requirement to transport children from the Monmouth area to Welsh medium provision in Abergavenny.	No impact
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	This proposal would result in more children being able to access Welsh medium provision in their community and be able to walk to school rather than being transported.	No impact
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Parents seeking Welsh medium education for their children in the Monmouth area will be able to access provision within their community. This will increase the opportunities for more learners to use the Welsh language outside of school in social settings and a range of authentic contexts.	No impact
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	No impact	No impact
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	If the proposal is agreed The Welsh Government's strategy of One Million Welsh Speakers will be	No impact

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?
Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	supported by the increase in the number of pupils being educated through the medium of Welsh.	
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The expansion of Welsh medium education in Monmouth means that more learners will have the opportunity to become bilingual in both English and Welsh and increase their chances of securing employment as adults and fulfilling their potential.	No impact

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>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	If learners are able to attend a Welsh medium primary school in their local community or within a short traveling time, they are more likely to choose and continue their education through the medium of Welsh.	No impact

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>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>This proposal is supported by our Welsh in Education Forum (WEF), the forum is represented by a number of key partners who are consulted with and are crucial in the delivery of our WESP targets.</p>	<p>No impact</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The new school is to serve the entire Monmouth cluster and all those affected by the proposal will be consulted with as part of the statutory consultation process. In addition, the WEF members have been actively engaged on the proposal.</p>	<p>No impact</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Currently families wanting to access Welsh medium Education in Monmouth have to travel to Abergavenny, this may be suppressing demand and resulting in parents not choosing Welsh medium education. Having a local Welsh medium school will resolve this issue and also stimulate demand.</p>	<p>No impact</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</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>.Having Welsh medium provision available in the local community will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils who are currently having to access provision in Abergavenny. Because of the reliance on school transport this may mean that pupils cannot access after school clubs and other activities that are available after school.</p>	<p>No impact</p>

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

	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	Appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures will be in place at the new school	No impact	No impact
Corporate Parenting	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

- Faithful and Gould condition and suitability survey including identified backlog maintenance requirements (the Proposal document cites local backlog maintenance measures)
- Data supplied by Health on the number of “live births” within the County.
- Data from Planning on number of Housing Developments planned for the immediate coming years.
- Current numbers on school rolls and trend analysis.
- Surplus places – data from MCC Access team
- Planning of school places data – MCC Access team

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 Main benefits of the proposal is by creating Welsh medium provision in Monmouth we are enabling the local community to access education through the medium of Welsh without having to travel long distances to Abergavenny. This will in turn increase the amount of

Welsh medium places across Monmouthshire so meeting our targets within our WESP. We will also be contributing to the Welsh governments strategy of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.

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

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
1.0	Cabinet	18/01/2023	No amendments made.
2.0	Cabinet	07/06/2023	