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CONSULTATION REPORT

Review of Primary School catchment areas in
Monmouthshire (Phase 1)

Consultation period:

8th January 2024 to 19th February 2024

1. Introduction

On 13th December 2023, the Council's Cabinet agreed to commence an ongoing review of primary school catchment areas across the county. This decision follows on from the review of secondary school catchment areas undertaken in 2019.

The first stage of this review was launched on 8th January 2024, where the Council entered into a public consultation on some proposed changes to primary school catchment areas. The consultation on the proposed changes was open for a period of 6 weeks, concluding on 19th February 2024.

The areas affected by this review were confirmed as:

- Review area 1 – Tredunnoch, Llanhennock and Llandegveth

This consultation report now seeks to inform consultees and other interested parties of the outcome of the consultation by means of firstly summarising each of the responses received by consultees, and secondly responding to these by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal, or rejection to the concerns with supporting reasons.

2. Distribution of the Consultation report

This consultation report has been published on the Monmouthshire Council Council website www.monmouthshire.gov.uk. The following consultees and interested parties will be contacted and advised of the availability of this report

The governing body of the relevant schools

- Governing bodies of schools affected by proposals:
 - Usk Church in Wales Primary School
 - Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary School

Neighbouring Local Authorities affected by the proposals

- Newport City Council

Parents of Children Likely to be affected

Parents of children residing within the affected areas

Other key parties

- Members of the School Admission Forum
- County Councillors
- Ward Members for the affected areas
- All Monmouthshire Primary School
- Church in Wales Diocese
- Roman Catholic Diocese

3. Background into the review of catchment areas

The majority of primary school catchment areas within Monmouthshire have been in place in their current form since the reorganisation of local government in 1996, and it is thought that they have been in place for many years prior to this. In some cases, it is thought that the catchment areas do not seem to follow a specific rationale. For example, they are not in all cases either based on nearest school or alternatively through connecting communities. Some primary school catchment areas are also show trends of regular overpopulation based on the birth data from Health.

A review of secondary school catchment areas was undertaken in 2018, with a particular focus on the provision within the North / Central parts of the County. There were two key principles that underpinned this review:

- 1) To ensure that secondary school catchment areas are both supportive and reflective of transitional arrangements between primary and secondary schools.
- 2) To ensure that Monmouthshire residents have access to a secondary school that falls within the County boundaries.

As a result of the above consultation, the catchment boundaries for Monmouth and King Henry VIII Comprehensive Schools were extended to absorb the areas of Usk, Goytre and surrounding areas that previously fell within the catchment of Caerleon Comprehensive School, Newport. The catchment area for Monmouth

Comprehensive School was also aligned to that of Trellech and Llandogo Primary Schools to support transitional arrangements.

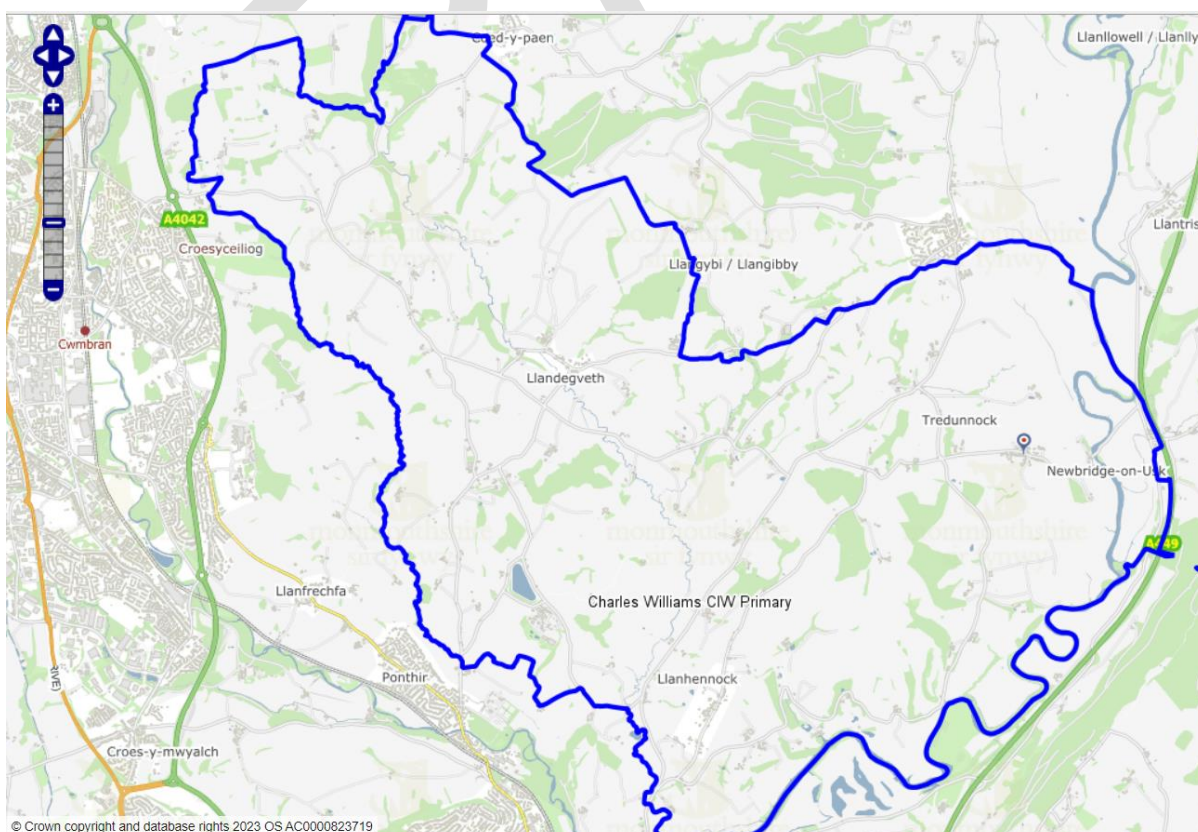
We are now seeking to build on the work undertaken so far by commencing a review of primary school catchment areas. On 26th July 2023, a scrutiny workshop was held with Elected Members, forming an opportunity to highlight any areas of concern for review. Alongside this, the Council is in the process of implementing a new revised local development plan (RLDP), which proposes housing developments in most corners of the County. It's clear that primary school catchment areas will need to be reviewed in each cluster as the RLDP unfolds between 2025 and 2033, as we build our education provision to meet the demands of this plan.

This consultation kick starts this programme with further consultations to follow in response to our duty to ensure we have a sufficient number of school places in the right areas of the County.

4. Reminder of the Proposals

The Council has consulted on proposals to amend their school admission arrangements to accommodate the villages of Tredunnock, Llanhennock and Llandegveth into the catchment area for Usk Church in Wales Primary School.

The affected area currently forms part of the catchment area for Charles Williams Church In Wales Primary School, Newport, and does not have a designated primary catchment that falls within Monmouthshire. A map detailing the affected area can be shown below:



Through this consultation, the Council sought the views of consultees and interested parties on whether the primary school catchment boundary should be amended for the specified areas (area identified above), to form part of the catchment area for Usk CIW Primary school.

The data that is available to us suggests that there are 28 children currently of primary school age living within the affected area that would be impacted by proposals should they proceed. The table below provides a summary of the school preferences for those residing within the affected area.

School	Number attending	%
Charles Williams Primary	13	46.4
Usk CIW Primary School	9	32.1
Private School	2	7.1
Other	4	14.2
Total	28	

The below table provides information received from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and identifies the children living within the affected area who will become of primary school age seeking places in Reception between September 2024 and September 2027.

Academic Year	Usk CIW Primary (current catchment)	Affected area (currently Charles Williams catchment)
September 2024	35	2
September 2025	27	4
September 2026	25	2
September 2027	30	1

The current capacity of Usk Church in Wales Primary School allows for 40 children into each year group.

5. Why did we consult on this proposal?

No designated catchment school within Monmouthshire.

One of the identified aims of our catchment review has been to consider the areas of Monmouthshire that do not currently have a designated catchment School that falls within County. The primary catchment school is presently one that falls within the city of Newport. The proposed changes to the affected areas would allow children resident in Monmouthshire to access a primary school that is within the county in which they live.

Transitional arrangements between Primary and Secondary School.

Charles Williams Primary School is the designated primary school for the affected area, with Monmouth Comprehensive School being the designated secondary school catchment. The current arrangements do not align with our transition arrangements between primary and secondary school, as the current primary catchment school is not a feeder school for the designated secondary catchment school. The proposed changes would see an alignment between the primary and secondary school catchments for the affected areas, enabling the cohorts of children to remain together when entering into that daunting transition between Primary to Secondary School.

Access to School places

The parents of children and young people currently residing within the affected area have the opportunity to express a preference for a school at which they wish for their child to attend. This preference does not need to be for the designated catchment school, however, children residing within the catchment area for a preferred school receive a priority in the event of oversubscription.

Those residing within the affected area are not afforded with the above priority for a Monmouthshire School as they do not have a designated primary catchment school within the county in which they live. The proposals would address this matter.

Provision of Home to School Transport

A further consideration of the proposed change is the current provision for home to school transport that currently serves the affected area. The council's current policy provides free home to school transport to the nearest or catchment school if residing 1.5 miles (primary) or 2 miles (secondary) or more from the home address.

The affected area does not currently qualify for free home to school transport to a Monmouthshire School.

6. Consultation arrangements

Background

The School Admissions Code Wales (July 2013) confirms that Local Authorities must consult on the admission arrangements for those schools for which it is the admissions authority. Where changes to existing arrangements are proposed, including school catchment areas, consultation must be undertaken with those likely to be affected by the proposals.

The Council has been required to undertake this consultation by 1st March 2024 and determine the outcome of the proposals by 15th April 2024 should it wish to implement the proposals for September 2025 onwards.

Methodology

On 13th December 2023, the Council's Cabinet approved proposals to engage with key stakeholders on proposed changes to the School admissions Policy, namely a review of primary school catchment areas.

On 8th January 2024, the council engaged in the first stage of its review of primary school catchment areas, which focussed on the areas of Tredunnoch, Llandegveth and Llanhennock. The formal consultation period lasted for 6 weeks, concluding on 19th February 2024.

The consultation document and key information was either circulated to or made available to the consultees listed under appendix 1 of this report. The consultation information was also published on the Council's website via [Consultation on School Admission Arrangements 2025/26 - Monmouthshire](#)

The Council raised awareness of the consultation through directly targeting those affected by proposals. Usk Church in Wales Primary School and Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary school also arranged for the circulation of correspondence to all of their parents.

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

- 1) Attending one of the dedicated public consultation sessions.
- 2) Completing the consultation questionnaire, which was made available on our website at [Consultation on School Admission Arrangements 2025/26 - Monmouthshire](#)

Consultees were also advised that they could contact us via 01633 644508 or by emailing accesstolearning@monmouthshire.gov.uk if they had any questions on the proposals.

Public Consultation Meetings

During the consultation process, the Council facilitated public consultation sessions with the communities likely to be affected by these proposals. The purpose of these sessions were to engage with the community who may wish to hear more about the proposals, ask any questions or share their views.

The public consultation sessions took place on the following dates:

Review Area	Date	Venue
Tredunnoch, Llanhennoch and Llandegveth	6 th February 2024. Open drop in session between 4pm – 6pm	County Hall, Usk
	7 th February 2023. Open drop in session between 1pm – 4pm	County Hall, Usk

All of the consultation meetings were attended by officers of the councils' directorate for children and young people, and provided interested parties with an opportunity to learn more about the proposals and ask any questions / raise any concerns.

Copies of the full consultation document and feedback proformas were made available at each of the consultation sessions.

Unfortunately, there were no consultees in attendance at either of the above sessions.

7. Formal responses to this consultation

The Council have received a number of formal responses to this proposal, submitted either via the online survey. The table below offers a broad profile of the consultees responding to the consultation, together with a view on whether they are in support of or against the proposals.

Respondent category	Total number of responses	Total number in support of proposals	Total number not in support of proposals
Parent / Carer	10	7	3
School Governor	5	5	0
Councillor	1	1	0
Other	1	0	1
Total	17	13	4

Officers have studied the formal responses received in relation to this proposal and has extracted the key themes for consideration in determining how the proposal moves forward. A copy of the full responses can be found under appendix 1.

The themes coming through from those in favour of the proposals are:

Theme	Comment
1. Connecting Communities	A view that the affected area has a greater association with Usk than it does with Newport, with an increasing number of children wishing to attend Usk CIW Primary School
2. Access to Monmouthshire Schools	A view that children residing within Monmouthshire should be able to access a school within Monmouthshire
3. Benefit to Usk CIW Primary	A view that the numbers on roll at Usk CIW primary school are reducing and are likely to continue to reduce over coming years, so extending the catchment for the school will have a positive impact
4. Increase in choice	A view that residents of the affected area will have an increase in the options available to them, with both Charles Williams CIW Primary and Usk CIW Primary being options should proposals be implemented
5. Home to school transport	A view that the proposals would provide equity, with Monmouthshire children able to receive free home to school transport to a Monmouthshire Primary School, as this isn't currently the case under existing arrangements
6. Ministerial Links	A view that the affected areas are at the heart of the ministerial area of the church in Wales, which has many other churches which feed into Usk CIW Primary School. The proposals would provide a Church commonality for children, parents and grandparents.

The themes coming through from the consultation from those who were not in favour of proposals were:

Theme	Concern summary	LA Response
1. Capacity of Usk CIW	A concern Usk CIW primary school is currently overflowing and it can already be difficult to obtain a place without adding to the catchment	<p>The capacity of Usk CIW Primary School is currently 280, with an intake number of 40 per year group. There are currently 256 children on roll, with only 2 of the 7 classes that have met its admission number of 30. There are presently no children of the waiting list for Usk CIW Primary School.</p> <p>Within the consultation document, the Council published projected numbers for Usk CIW Primary School that gives some confidence that children residing within the affected area (who are eligible to start Reception over the coming years) can be accommodated.</p>
2. Secondary travelling distances	A concern that travelling distances to secondary schools in particular is significant for the affected area which creates environmental issues	<p>This consultation is relevant to the primary provision within the county. The affected area already has a designated secondary catchment school for a school within the county. However, there is currently no primary school catchment for a Monmouthshire school.</p> <p>The Secondary School catchments were reviewed in 2019 and following an extensive consultation, affected areas were</p>

		assigned either Monmouth or King Henry VIII Schools as their new catchment. This decision did not and still does not remove the opportunities for parents to apply for a school that is closer to their home address.
3. Increased travelling times and distances	A concern that Charles Williams CIW Primary School is significantly closer for some children within the affected areas and encourages active travel rather than transporting children to Usk CIW Primary via bus / car. Requiring children to travel to Usk daily would not comply with the Well Being and Future Generations Act	The Council's proposals have been formed to enable children living in Monmouthshire to access a school within the county, should they wish to do so. There would be no requirement for any child living within the affected area to attend Usk CIW Primary School, as families will continue to have the right to express a preference for their child's school. The Council's proposals are unable to amend the admission arrangements for Charles Williams Primary School, so the existing admission arrangements for this school would continue to operate.
4. Accessing the proposed new catchment school	A concern that some parents may not wish for their young children to travel on school transport to Usk and would be required to inherit the travelling costs of taking them themselves. Also, concern re increase in congestion around the school as a result	The Council is proposing these changes so that families residing in Monmouthshire have access to a Monmouthshire school. Parents residing within the affected area can continue to express a preference for their child's school, and we respect that travelling arrangements may have an impact on a parent's decision.

		<p>The governing body of Charles Williams CIW Primary School are responsible for the admission arrangements for the school, and this consultation does not impact on those arrangements. Therefore, parents who wish to attend this school can apply for places in the same way that families previously have.</p>
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8. Consultation with Newport City Council

The Council consulted with Newport City Council as a key party affected by these proposals. Whilst Newport City Council are not the admission authority for Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary School, it is a school that resides within their City.

The closing date for consultation responses was 19th February 2024 and a response has not been received from Newport City Council in relation to this consultation.

9. Consultation with Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary

The Council consulted with the Headteacher and governing body of Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary School. The governing body are the admission authority for Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary School and determine the catchment for their school.

As mentioned in the consultation document, these proposals are unable to amend the admission arrangements (including catchment) for Charles Williams CIW Primary but proposes to amend the catchment for Usk Church in Wales Primary School.

The closing date for consultation responses was 19th February 2024 and a response has not been received from the governing body of Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary School in relation to this consultation.

10. Financial Implications

Charles Williams CIW Primary School is currently the designated catchment school for the affected area. Should the children known to be residing within the affected

area chose to attend their catchment school and require home to school transport assistance, the home to school transport costs would be in the region of £41,580 per annum. However, there are no children currently receiving transport from the affected area to Charles Williams CIW Primary School so the costs of current provision is zero.

Usk CIW Primary School is the proposed new catchment school (in line with Monmouthshire's admission arrangements) for the affected area. Should the children known to be residing within the affected area chose to attend their proposed new catchment school, they would receive an entitlement to free home to school transport, with the costs estimated to be in the region of £41,580 per annum.

In light of the above, the immediate financial impact associated with this proposal is thought to be £41,580.

Important: It is important to note that the above costs are estimates provided on the basis of current home to school transport costs, which are likely to increase by the implementation date of September 2025. It is also important to note that the Council will still have a duty to provide transport to Charles Williams CIW Primary School in circumstances where it is deemed nearest and there is a parental preference. This will increase the costs over those quoted above.

11. General overview and consensus

The consultation process undertaken by the Council has without question been a useful exercise, providing a full and open opportunity to test and critic the proposals put forward.

Through analysis of the feedback received from the formal consultation responses, the Council can confidently draw an overall conclusion of general support for the following proposal:

To amend the catchment area for Usk Church in Wales Primary School to incorporate the villages of Tredunnoch, Llanhennock and Llandegveth

Whilst this consultation has overall been able to evidence support from the majority of those responding to the consultation, it is acknowledged that there were some concerns towards the proposals as identified under section 7 of this report. This report has enabled us to remind consultees that the existing arrangements for obtaining places at Charles Williams CIW Primary School are not impacted by these proposals and parents can therefore continue to apply for places should this be their preference.

Whilst we acknowledge that some children and young people may be travelling further to access a place at Usk Church in Wales Primary, such a decision would be

in line with a parent' preference of wishing for their child to access a school within the county.

The concluding matter arising from this report is that a recommendation to proceed to implement the proposals as consulted upon (with effect from September 2025) should be put forward to the Councils Cabinet on 10th April 2024. Such a decision will ensure that the arrangements for both primary and secondary education within the affected area are aligned, and will provide equity across the county through ensuring that all children and young people across the county fall within the catchment area for a Monmouthshire School.

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12. Appendix 1 - full consultation responses

Respondents in favour of proposals:

Respondent	Full response
1.	In the 7.5 years we've lived in the area, we're not aware of any children that have actually attended Charles William school and instead they have attended Usk. It is the case that residents of Tredunnock tend to associate themselves more with Usk than Caerleon for shopping, healthcare, leisure etc. and so that probably informs parents choices of where they want their children to go to school. From this perspective it makes perfect sense for Tredunnock to come into catchment for Usk primary.
2.	People living within Monmouthshire, should be attending schools within their county.
3.	Usk Primary School has falling roll and would benefit from more students. It is also good for students that live in Monmouthshire to attend a school in Monmouthshire where they can be fully support.
4.	I'm very pleased to see this consultation, and I offer my support to the proposals. I feel its important for Monmouthshire residents to have access to Monmouthshire schools.
5.	I think there should be more options for children living in this area, I think the secondary school catchment needs careful consideration- travelling half hour each way to a school isn't ideal
6.	We live in the Monmouthshire county and as a resident of Monmouthshire I feel it is only correct that our children go to a Monmouthshire school, the closest at Primary age being Usk Church in Wales Primary School. I did initially have issues with the passenger transport not wanting to let my children go onto the school bus even though they go to Usk Primary school, apparently it was out of catchment area but eventually due to them not 'getting in' to Charles Williams they were then allowed to use the school bus, i wouldn't want any other parent to have to experience this.
7.	The proposal will give parents the choice of Primary School with both providing opportunity to receive home to school transport therefore a better option for families. The proposal will also increase the potential intake for

	Usk CiW Primary School which will assist in the management of provision going forwards with reducing intakes over the next few years.
8.	Treddunock, Llanhennock and Llandegfedd are part of the Heart of Monmouthshire ministry Area which also includes Usk. As a foundation Governor I welcome the opportunity for pupils to attend a CIW school within Monmouthshire and the Ministry Area
9.	Would allow access to an excellent School, and assist with the school admission numbers. Children would not be disadvantaged by attendance at the Usk CiW Primary School and it should not inconvenience parents/ children if transport is provided.
10.	the villages affected are in the Heart of Monmouthshire Ministry Area of the Church in Wales which has many other churches in its catchment area, which also feed Usk primary school. Therefore there is a Church commonality for children, parents and grandparents.
11.	No reason provided
12.	No reason provided
13.	No reason provided

Respondents not in favour of proposals:

Respondent	Full response
1.	usk is at overflowing currently and can be difficult for a child to get a place. can the school and its facilities cope with more children there is no option to extend, and however many children currently qualify please consider the fact that the areas could easily be built on.
2.	Caerleon is within easy cycling distance from Llanhennock - approximately 2 miles. Most days, therefore we are able to cycle to school. Usk is approximately 6.5 miles away. Getting to school would either require use of a car, or provision of a school bus.

	<p>There are numerous infant and primary aged children within Llanhennock. To the best of my knowledge all of the local children either attend CWP, or private school.</p> <p>Given the significantly closer distance from Llanhennock to CWP, shorter travel times and ability to easily travel using active travel, I would argue that changing the school catchment to Usk, is neither reasonable nor sustainable.</p> <p>For a number of reasons, requiring children in Llanhennock, to travel daily to Usk for school, would have a negative impact on them and does not comply with the Well Being of Future Generations Act.</p>
3.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distance the children will travel. Primary school is a good distance but secondary schools in Monmouthshire is considerably further. 2. Cost for the travel, as stated about. The current distance to a Newport school warrants travel as it is over the suggested miles but as you are moving the catchment to a school within Monmouthshire the mileage is considerably more. 3. Environmental issues with travel. Again linked with my two points above, as we are living in a society where we are trying to reduce the carbon foot print the amount of travel adds to this considerably. I am not just thinking of the primary provision within MCC but the secondary provision. Both King Henry in Abergavenny and Monmouth Comp are a very long way from the villages you are considering. I very much doubt school transport will be electric, so an old diesel mini bus chugging around the authority will have an impact.
4.	<p>Increased distance of travel and subsequent cost of providing transport. Accessing the entitled school transport is a difficult process for those who wish to use it.</p> <p>Parents of children that are of reception age and young primary may feel the children are too young to travel on school transport and would have increased costs for transporting children to a school further away and worries regarding safety of the children.</p> <p>Usk is exceptionally busy with heavy traffic at school start and finish times increasing air pollution and no adequate system for dropping off & collecting young children means people park dangerously and encroach upon private residential parking areas.</p>

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