



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

# CONSULTATION REPORT

Relocation and associated increase in  
capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni

Monmouthshire County Council

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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 proposed increase in capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni from 317 places to 420 places. It is proposed that the capacity increase will be achieved through relocating the school to the site formerly occupied by Deri View Primary School.

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

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

- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of schools affected by the proposal
- The governing body of any school affected by the proposal
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Headteachers of schools affected by the proposal
- Welsh Ministers
- All MCC Town and Community Councils
- All MCC Assembly Members representing the area served by the school
- All Members of Parliament representing MCC area
- All MCC Libraries
- 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
- Welsh in Education Forum

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

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### 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.

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.

At its meeting in October 2017, Cabinet agreed the submission of its Band B proposals to Welsh Government as part of what was then known as the 21st Century Schools Programme. The most significant part of the proposal involved the establishment of an all-through school on the King Henry VIII School site, which would involve the merger of King Henry VIII Comprehensive and Deri View Primary Schools.

However, the scheme also outlined the Council's commitment to increasing its Welsh medium provision within the area, and agreed that the above scheme would provide the opportunity to relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to the 420 place Deri View Primary School site, subject to statutory consultation processes. The Statutory consultation process surrounding the new 3-19 School concluded in January 2022 where Cabinet made the decision to establish the school with effect from September 2023.

The new school has now opened, albeit the primary and secondary provision is currently located on separate sites whilst we await the completion of the new school building works. It is anticipated that the primary elements of the new provision will relocate to the former King Henry VIII Comprehensive School site during the autumn term 2024, leaving the former Deri View Primary School site vacant.

The above has enabled us to engage in the statutory consultation processes required to relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to the 420 place site, with effect from April 2025.

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## 4. A reminder of our proposal

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The proposal is to relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni from its current site of St Davids Road, Abergavenny, NP7 6HF to the former Deri View Primary School site of Llwynu Lane, Abergavenny, NP7 6AR. The approximate distance between the current site and the proposed site is 0.4 miles.

The proposed relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will enable the capacity of the School to be increased from its current 317 places (45 per year group) to 420 places (60 per year group) with an additional 60 place Meithrin (nursery).

## 5. 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 fully supports and is committed to the Welsh Government's national strategy Cymraeg 2050, which introduces a long-term vision for a Wales where the Welsh Language thrives. The strategy aims to increase the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050. The Council recognises that in order to contribute to this national target, it must deliver on its statutory duties to ensure that there is growth of the Welsh language across the county. One of the ways of us achieving this growth is to continue to develop and improve our provision of Welsh medium education and the benefits it brings. It is hoped that by doing so, there will be an increase in the demand for Welsh medium school places across the County.

### 2) Responding to existing Welsh Medium demand

Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is our current Welsh medium primary school that serves the North of the County (Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy will open in September 2024 as a seedling provision). The school was originally opened on its current site as a 210 10 place Primary School, with provision available for 30 children per year group. The demand for Welsh medium education across the area has since increased and in response to this demand, the Council has worked closely with the school and its governing body to increase the capacity of the school within the limitations of its current site.

The school now offers a capacity for up to 317 children and young people with year group intake number of 45. In addition to this, the school has a 60 place Meithrin. Unfortunately, the increase in capacity is delivered through temporary accommodation and is not a sustainable option to allow us to reach our

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aspirations outlined within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). In addition, there are no opportunities to further increase the capacity of the school on its current site.

### 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.

As mentioned above, the Council over recent years has supported the increase in capacity at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni in response to its growing demand. However, of its 317 available places, 137 places are currently delivered through the use of temporary accommodation, which the Council does not consider to be either suitable or sustainable for the delivery quality teaching and learning in the longer term. In addition to this, the Headteacher and governing body continue to report concerns around the unsustainable pressures on facilities across the site as a result of increasing numbers on roll.

## 6. Consultation Arrangements

### 6.1 Methodology

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On 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 the Council's Cabinet approved the proposals to commence statutory consultation thereby allowing the Council to engage with key stakeholders on increasing the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 places

In line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018, the Council produced a consultation document, published on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024, which also represented the commencement of the statutory consultation period. The formal consultation period lasted 8 weeks (including 20 school days), concluding on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

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

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

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

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

## 6.2 Consultation Meetings

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

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

These consultation sessions were held at the proposed new site (former Deri View Primary School) on the following dates / times:

Consultee	Date	Time
Staff	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	16:00 - 16:50
Governors	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	17:00 – 17:50
Parents of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and other interested parties	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	18:00 – 19:00



The following officers from the Council's Directorate for Children and Young People were in attendance at the consultation sessions, providing stakeholders with the opportunity to learn more about the proposals and ask any questions or raise any concerns.

- Chief Officer for Education
- Finance & Support Services Manager
- Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme Manager
- Access to Learning Manager
- Early Years Manager
- School Admissions and Planning Support Officer

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

### **Consultation session with staff**

The first consultation session was held with staff of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. There were 9 staff present at the consultation session.

The stakeholders in attendance were keen to learn more about the proposals and were generally very enthusiastic towards the proposed move. A summary of the main points raised during the session and the Council's response is listed below:

Questions / comments	Council Response
How long will the process take in total?	The consultation document outlines the timescales concerning this statutory process. Should the process proceed beyond consultation stages, the final decision will now be taken by Cabinet at their meeting in September 2024.
Will we be expected to move during the school holidays?	No, you will probably have 2 days before summer holidays to pack and then 2 days after to unpack. The Council will manage the move of items to the new site
Will there be separate meetings for Cylch Meithrin as they need to have an opportunity to discuss the proposal?	This consultation is in relation to the increase in capacity and relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. The Cylch Meithrin is an independent provider currently offering childcare on the site. There won't be any separate consultation meetings with the Clyth Meithrin specifically relating to these proposals, but Sue Hall, Early Years Manager, is happy to come and meet with them at any

	point. We are very much mindful that provision will need to be made available for the Cylch Meithrin at the proposed new site.
Will there be money for the move?	There is approximately £1 million funding allocated for this project to support the move and complete any necessary refurbishment works. Approximately £200K is to cover the backlog maintenance and then the rest is for signage, redecorating etc and any changes that the school may wish to make to ensure this building feels like a new school.
We are concerned that the cost of running a larger school will have a negative impact on our already tight budget.	Funding that the school receives is considered under two areas. Firstly, pupils numbers and secondly square footage of the building. The school will continue to be funded in the same way it is now around pupil numbers, however, in recognition of the increase in square footage the school will receive an uplift to cover the running costs of the larger building.
Will there be any furniture or equipment left for us?	Some of the furniture and equipment will be transferred to the new King Henry VIII 3-19 school as it has been purchased by them. However, there will be some left behind which you will have first choice of to supplement your existing furniture and equipment.
Will we get the same push on advertising and promotion that the new school in Monmouth has had?	The School and governing body is responsible for the promotion of its school. However, there is a Welsh medium promotion group which is heavily focussed on promoting Welsh medium education across the county so would be able to offer support to our 3 Welsh medium schools. This statutory process will provide us with excellent opportunities to market the school through its social media channels.

### **Consultation session with Governors**

The second consultation session was held with Governors of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. There were 5 governors in attendance at the session.

The stakeholders in attendance were keen to learn more about the proposals and the likely timescales for moving.

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

Questions / comments	Council Response
We are aware that the King Henry 3-19 project has been delayed, so realistically when are we likely to be moving?	A realistic timescale which takes account of the delays at the 3-19 school is September 2025. The building will be empty by Easter 2025 but it makes sense to complete all necessary works prior to the school moving in.
My previous experience of moving a school is that it is very stressful for all staff especially the SLT and timelines can often change. Is this timeframe realistic?	The Council believes that the timescales of September 2025 is realistic. The timescales allowed for refurbishment between Esster 2025 and September 2025 should be more than sufficient
When will this timeline be confirmed?	We will have more confirmed information on the 3-19 school progress before this Easter break
Do parents know about the current time delay?	The delays to the 3-19 project have been publicised, but are happy send a letter if this helps.
Finance is a huge concern for us as we are facing a huge deficit so we need reassurance that we will be supported, funded for the move, and then promoted.	<p>Funding that the school receives is considered under two areas. Firstly, pupil numbers and secondly square footage of the building. The school will continue to be funded in the same way it is now around pupil numbers, however, in recognition of the increase in square footage the school will receive an uplift to cover the running costs of the larger building.</p> <p>As far as the deficit goes, we will obviously be realistic in our approach to this being recovered but we cannot allow it to continue to grow.</p>
Can someone come to the next Governing Body meeting to speak to all the governors?	Yes, relevant officers will be more than happy to attend any future governing body meeting.
When we move sites the school demographic could change hugely and we will probably have more children with more complex needs, we need to know	Schools have adopted the funding formula for how children with additional learning needs are supported. Clearly if there is an increase in the number of children with complex needs that cannot

we will be funded and supported with this change?	be supported through the delegated budget, the school will be able to follow the appropriate channels to obtain funding support
What time will be given for the move and will any equipment be left for us, we need good IT equipment?	Staff will be given 2 days before summer holidays to pack and then 2 days after to unpack. The Council will take responsibility for relocating items to the new site.  Some of the furniture and equipment will be transferred to the new King Henry VIII 3-19 school as it has been purchased by them. However, there will be some left behind which you will have first choice of to supplement your existing furniture and equipment.  There will be money for IT in the move costs.
Will we be able to have a meeting nearer the move date to run through finances again?	Yes, relevant officers will be more than happy to meet with governors to discuss their budget
We will need clarification on financing and staffing the change to the Caretaking and cleaning needs for this much bigger site.	Yes, the Council will happily discuss these arrangements with the governing body.

### **Consultation session with Parents of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and other interested parties**

The third consultation session was held with parents of children at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and other interested parties. There were 20 consultees present during the session.

The stakeholders in attendance were generally positive about the proposed move and increase in capacity, although felt that the school will need significant support to manage the transition.

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

Questions / comments	Council response
Do you envisage any stumbling blocks for this move?	The Council is required under the School Organisation Code Wales (2018) to complete statutory consultation processes around proposals such as these.

	We cannot at this stage predict the outcome of the consultation and the decision that the Council's Cabinet will take, however, if the consultation demonstrates support towards proposals, we see no reason why they will not move to implementation stage.
How many children currently go to Ysgol Y Fenni?	There are approximately 240 in years Reception to Year 6 and 37 in Meithrin.
Is the Cylch Meithrin moving as well	Yes, although the exact location within the school has not been finalised.
Will there be a meeting for the Cylch to discuss the move?	This consultation is in relation to the increase in capacity and relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. The Cylch Meithrin is an independent provider currently offering childcare on the site. There won't be any separate consultation meetings with the Clyth Meithrin specifically relating to these proposals, but Sue Hall, Early Years Manager, is happy to come and meet with them at any point. We are very much mindful that provision will need to be made available for the Cylch Meithrin at the proposed new site.
The Cylch were hoping to have children from 6mths old on site so will all our needs be taken into consideration?	We can meet with the Clych Meithrin to discuss their wishes, however it may not be possible to accommodate the very young children. We will need to involve the School to determine the most suitable location for the Cylch Meithrin on the proposed new site.
Is any of the money set aside for the move and refurbishment for the Cylch?	No funding will be allocated to the Clych Meithrin as it is a private organisation.
Will the Acorn centre be empty or will outside people have access to the site?	The Acorn centre will continue to operate, however, it will continue to be completely separate from the school. The area can be locked off and this will be enhanced further when work is carried out.
We have chosen to send our children to Welsh education and don't want them to be surrounded by English language from the Acorn Centre	The Acorn centre will be completely separate and closed off to children of the school
Is there going to be an increase in the school budget for the increase in management of the school that is going to be needed when moving from a 1 form entry school to a 2-form entry school?	The increase of pupil numbers will be gradual and the funding per pupil head will accompany the increase, but the current management will remain unchanged.

<p>The management of the move is going to be very stressful for the SLT, quite worrying it will take over their time.</p>	<p>The Council has been and will continue to engage with the Headteacher and do not currently have any concerns that this change can't be managed within the existing management structure. The Council will of course continue to offer support throughout the change management process.</p>
<p>What additional funding will be available?</p>	<p>Funding that the school receives is considered under two areas. Firstly, pupil numbers and secondly square footage of the building. The school will continue to be funded in the same way it is now around pupil numbers, however, in recognition of the increase in square footage the school will receive an uplift to cover the running costs of the larger building.</p>
<p>We have in the past had very large class sizes and I worry that this will be the case more often if we move to a bigger site and have a larger intake</p>	<p>All schools are funded through the same funding formula. Schools receive funding based on the number of children on roll, and the formula takes into account and supports the regulations around 1:30 pupil teacher ratios.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the headteacher and governing body to determine how this funding is used and how the classes across the school will be organised. However, they must be compliant with regulations unless permitted exceptions apply.</p>
<p>Will the new school in Monmouth affect our numbers.</p>	<p>Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy is opening in September 2024 as a seedling school, meaning it is not available to all primary age groups. However, as the school grows over the coming years and opens up to all ages groups, it will be expected that children within the Monmouth area will attend Trefynwy and not Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.</p>
<p>We need to promote this move and become a flagship school</p>	<p>The School and governing body is responsible for the promotion of its school. However, there is a Welsh medium promotion group which is heavily focussed on promoting Welsh medium education across the county so would be able to offer support to our 3 Welsh</p>

	medium schools. This statutory process will provide us with excellent opportunities to market the school through its social media channels.
What will happen to the old site?	A decision on the future of the current school site has not yet been determined
You mentioned the boilers need replacing; will you be looking at using sustainable energy?	Yes, we will be carrying out all the usual surveys etc to ensure we move forward in environmentally friendly way.
Are you having regular meetings with the Head to keep everyone up to date?	Yes, there are half termly meetings
I am worried that there will be staff burn out, surely there should be money available to cover this.	<p>The staff have looked around the school today and they are very excited about the proposed move and improvement to their working environment.</p> <p>There is no capacity to front load the school financially, and this has not been necessary for all other school reorganisation proposals completed across the county. We will continue to work closely with the Headteacher, governing body and staff of the school to ensure the proposed move is successful</p>
Why is the consultation being held so late in the day.	There were initial conversations in 2017 but a formal consultation on moving to this site couldn't start until the consultation on the King Henry 3-19 school was completed.
I would just like to say that both my son and daughter are very excited about the prospect of moving to this site as it is far superior to their current building, this is a very positive move.	Thank you for your comment. We are very much hopeful that we can proceed with these proposals and provide excellent opportunities for the Welsh medium community.

## 6. Formal Responses to proposals

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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 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024. 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.

### 6.1 Summary of consultation results

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The Council received a total of 18 formal responses to the proposals outlined within this report. A profile of the respondents can be found in the table below:

Respondent category	Number of responses
Parent / Carer (Y Fenni)	9
Governor (Y Fenni)	1
Staff (Y Fenni)	1
Governor (neighbouring schools)	1
Parent / Carer (neighbouring schools)	3
Community	1
Town / County Councillor	1
Other Organisations	1
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>18</b>

N.B. The above table reflects the number of formal responses received to this consultation, through means of either completing the consultation survey or by emailing [strategicroview@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:strategicroview@monmouthshire.gov.uk).

However, any informal feedback received from consultation engagement sessions is reflected within section 6.2 of this report.



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 *“Do you agree with the proposal”* to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 places through relocation to the former Deri View Primary School site? The responses to this question are shown in the table below:

Consultee response	Number of responses
Agree with proposals	10
Disagree with proposals	2
Agree with some aspects of the proposals	6
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>18</b>

10 out of the 18 respondents (56%) supported the proposal with a further 6 (33%) supporting aspects of the proposal. Only 2 respondents (11%) disagreed with the proposals.

A summary of the comments and questions received from respondents that fully supported the proposal along with the Councils response is provided below:

Respondent	Summary of consultee comment
1	Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is desperate for a better standard of facilities. The current offer was a major factor in our decision to choose English medium for our child. A new build would be the preferred option but the Deri View site is excellent and will allow expansion of the Welsh language.
2	The school has outgrown the capacity of the current school building and children are being taught in cabins on the school playground
3	More space and resources is needed for staff and pupils
4	Current school site is too cramped and a more spacious site is needed to accommodating this rapidly expanding school
5	The former Deri View site will be left empty so it makes sense for the school to move the short distance to benefit the community with a larger in take and better facilities
6	The school has outgrown its current site and desperately needs improved facilities to be able to provide the best opportunities for current and future pupils

7	The move to the former Deri View site is essential to support the increasing demand for Welsh medium education in the areas
8	The Governing Body are in full support of this move
9	The Staff are in full support of this move
10	Seems an appropriate way of increasing capacity and improving facilities

**Local Authority response**

The Council is pleased to receive these comments of support towards the proposals to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni through its relocation to the former Deri View Primary School site.

The school currently has capacity for 317 children from years Reception to year 6, and a further 60 part time places are available for children within the Meithrin. However, we acknowledge that a large proportion of this accommodation is provided through temporary accommodation.

We are hopeful that the proposals to relocate the school to the former Deri View site will not only provide the opportunity for Welsh medium growth, but will provide significantly improved teaching and learning facilities for current and future staff and pupils of the School.

We are also hopeful that these proposals can only impact positively on future in take numbers at the school and we will see a gradual increase in the number of children choosing to receive their education through the medium of Welsh.

6 out of the 18 respondents (33%) supported aspects of the proposal

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

Respondent	Summary of consultee comment
1	Agree with proposals to increase the capacity of the school to allow growth of the Welsh language. Also agree with improving the facilities available to staff and pupils. Would like further information on what the rating of the former Deri View building will be once works have been complete.
Council Response	
The below table sets out the assessment criteria used for assessing the conditions of our school buildings:	
CONDITION RATING	DEFINITION
A	As new condition
B	Sound, operationally safe, and exhibiting only minor deterioration

C	Operational but major repair or replacement needed in the short to medium-term (generally 3 years)
D	Inoperable or serious risk of major failure or breakdown

The condition rating of the proposed new site is current C, however, funding in the region of £1 million has been assigned to address the backlog maintenance on the site, as well as carry out some refurbishment works in line with the school's requirements. The rating will be assessed once final works have been completed.

2	Agree that a bigger site is needed to support the school, but feel more needs to be done to be able to offer the best Welsh education for the children in Monmouthshire
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#### Council Response

This consultation focusses on the proposed increase in capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni through its proposed relocation to the former Deri View Primary School site. We hope that, should proposals be supported and move to implementation, the Abergavenny community will benefit from an increased number of Welsh medium places as well as significantly improved teaching and learning facilities for the Welsh medium community.

Alongside these proposals, the Council has been successful in the establishment of Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy, a seedling school that will open in September 2024 serving the Monmouth Welsh medium community. Significant investment has also been made into Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin (Caldicot) to extend their capacity and improve the learning environment for Welsh medium learners in the South of the County.

This consultation demonstrates that the council is committed to continuing its journey of improving its provision for Welsh medium learners and has an adopted Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) which sets out our committed journey to Welsh medium education within the County.

3	Supportive of the school moving to a new site with improved facilities, but have concerns about how the transition will be managed to become a two form entry school. Class sizes at the school have often been above 30 which has impacted negatively on our children's education, but we have had no choice if we have wanted Welsh medium education. Would like assurances that there will be staff and resources for two forms per year
4	Children are currently educated in a school that is far too small for the capacity required. Pleased that the school is being relocated to a larger site with more capacity and better facilities, however, delays to the King Henry VIII 3-19 project will mean children will be educated in these conditions with oversubscribed classes for longer

Council response (3 and 4 above)

Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni currently has capacity for 317 children in years Reception to year 6. There is also capacity for 60 part time places within the Meithrin. As at the January annual census return, there were 236 on roll in years Reception to year 6 and 34 on roll within the Meithrin.

All schools are funded through the same funding formula. Schools receive funding based on the number of children on roll, and the formula is designed to be supportive of the Infant class size regulations around 1:30 pupil teacher ratios. The funding is topped up for each key stage to ensure that there is a teacher for every 30 pupils but this may mean that schools have to mix classes to achieve this.

It is the responsibility of the headteacher and governing body to determine how this funding is used and how the classes across the school will be organised. However, they must ensure compliance with regulations unless permitted exceptions apply. There is an exception to support applicants that require Welsh medium education where the preferred school is the only Welsh medium school within a reasonable distance of the home. All Schools must set a class structure that complies with the Infant class size regulations, with the permitted exception for Welsh medium education only be applied should further requests be received after the schools class organisation structure has been set.

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Proposals will help to address the concerns that Welsh schools are permitted to have class sizes that are not deemed acceptable for English medium schools. The proposals do not show any plans for future growth of secondary provision where pupils are opting for English medium due to the long commute to Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. These proposals will surely drive the need for Welsh medium secondary provision more locally to Monmouthshire.

Council Response

Please see above for the response to concerns around class sizes.

In terms of secondary school provision, the Council is very much aware that its duty to provide suitable Welsh medium education does not stop with primary age children. Children of Secondary school age in Monmouthshire currently receive their Welsh medium education at either Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed (South) or Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw (North).

The levels of Welsh medium learners within the county unfortunately have not yet led us to a position of being able to justify having a sustainable secondary Welsh medium provision within the county, and therefore our arrangements are currently delivered through this partnership with Newport City and Torfaen County Councils.

We very much hope that the number of learners choosing Welsh medium education will increase in response to our recent actions to invest in our 3 primary schools Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni, Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy and Ysgol Gymraeg Y

Ffin, and our provision for secondary age learners will need to be closely monitored in response to this planned increase in demand.

The Council has already begun its engagement with neighbouring authorities to discuss the future of Welsh medium secondary provision.

6	Agree with the move of the school to the new site but feel the Cylch Meithrin should have more consideration in the provision that will be offered at the new site
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**Council Response**

This consultation is in relation to the increase in capacity and relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. The Cylch Meithrin is an independent provider currently offering childcare on the site.

The priority for the Council at this stage of the process is to assess the feasibility and support around the proposed increase in capacity and relation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. Once a decision has been made on whether proposals are able to proceed to implementation stage, we can engage with the Cylch Meithrin to discuss their requirements. We are very much mindful that provision will need to be made available for the Cylch Meithrin at the proposed new site, and will need to discuss an appropriate location with the Headteacher and governing body of the school, once we know the outcome of this statutory process

2 out of the 18 respondents (11%) did not support the proposal with a general consensus that investment into Welsh medium schools is not appropriate use of public money in Monmouthshire.

A summary of the comments/questions received from the 2 respondents who did not support the proposal along with the Council's response is provided below:

Respondent	Summary of consultee comment
1	Increasing the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will put the Council's finances under further strain. The Welsh language is not a priority for the majority of taxpayers in Monmouthshire
2	Waste of money
<b>Council response</b>	
<p>The Council is disappointed to receive feedback that is not supportive of the proposals to relocation and increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.</p> <p>The Council, through its consultation document, has evidenced the increasing numbers of children from within the area that have chosen for their children to be educated through the medium of Welsh. In response to this demand, the</p>	

Council have provided additional temporary accommodation on the site of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni, however, this does not meet the aspirations of the Council in terms of delivering excellent teaching and learning facilities.

The Council is very mindful of the significant financial pressure that it currently faces and will almost certainly face in immediate future years. However, it is equally mindful of the statutory requirement to increase the number of children receiving education through the medium of Welsh in line with the Welsh Government's target to achieve 1 million Welsh speakers across the country by 2050.

The Council feels that the proposals will provide significantly improved teaching and learning facilities to the Welsh medium learners within the area, and sets the foundations to increase the number of Welsh medium learners to play our part in achieving these National targets.

## 6.1 Views of the Education Achievement Service (EAS)

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The Council has commissioned the Education Achievement Service to deliver the School Improvement service to schools within our county. Their response is supportive of our proposals as published below:

Proposal 4 offers a cost effective option for expanding provision on a site which is only 0.4 miles from the current site. Expanding provision will be in line with the objectives of the county's WESP and support the Welsh 2050 strategy. It will expand the capacity of Welsh-medium education in the Abergavenny area and enable more pupils to access Welsh-medium education. The demand for Welsh medium education in the area continues to grow and unless the capacity is expanded locally it will not be possible to meet the need on the current site.

Expansion will have a positive effect on the Welsh language in the county. There is one Welsh-medium school in the catchment area and therefore ensuring a sufficient supply of Welsh-medium places will give better access to Welsh-medium education in an area where English-medium education is the norm. Developing immersion provision on site will give all families, regardless of their linguistic background, the same opportunity to consider Welsh medium education.

## 7. ESTYN Response

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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**

The local authority has outlined a clear rationale for its proposal, which is to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni from 317 to 420 places, along with 60 nursery places through its relocation to the school site previously occupied by Deri View Primary School.

The local authority provides an appropriately detailed description of the proposal, giving an expected timescale for statutory procedures. It proposes that Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni will relocate to its new school site, with its revised capacity of 420 places (plus 60 nursery places), with effect from April 2025.

The proposer identifies the expected advantages and disadvantages clearly and fairly, in comparison with the status quo. One of the main benefits is the increase in capacity and it appears that the new school site will be a prompt solution to relieve the accommodation pressures currently experienced on the school's existing site. There will be an opportunity to establish an immersion facility at the site, which will allow a period of intensive support to enable those young people who are considered "latecomers" to the language to access Welsh-medium provision alongside their peers.

It appears that the site already provides excellent teaching and learning facilities and will help the authority to achieve the targets set in its WESP and, as a result, have a positive impact on the community of Abergavenny who wish to be educated through the medium of Welsh. It seems that the development will allow the growth of Welsh-medium education in the area. As a result, this will make a beneficial contribution to the Welsh Government's aim of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. It appears that there are no opportunities to increase the school's capacity further on its current site.

It is assumed that nearly all of the risks are of low impact and clear countermeasures are proposed in response to the six possibilities that may arise. The local authority has considered three other options, including maintaining the status quo and the current capacity. As a result of this option, it appears that the council would not be able to grow Welsh-medium provision in the area beyond the current capacity.

The proposer has considered the effect of the changes on learners' travel arrangements. The new site is approximately 0.4 miles from the current site, which means a small increase in travel distance for some. It is possible that the proposals are not expected to have an effect on transport arrangements between the home and school. Home to school transport will be provided to Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni in

accordance with the existing policy. Pupils who attend their nearest or catchment primary school and who live more than 1.5 miles will be eligible.

The local authority has usefully shown the effect of the proposal on surplus places. English-medium schools in the cluster have been identified as schools likely to be affected by the proposal, as there is a desire to increase the number of learners who access Welsh-medium education, and particularly Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni in line with this consultation, which is likely to lead to a reduction in numbers on roll across the English-medium schools. For example, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in numbers in five English-medium schools over the next five years, with an increase of 2.6% in surplus places by January 2028. It appears that Ysgol y Fenni will be the school that is affected immediately, as it is intended to relocate to a new site with a greater capacity of 420 places and 60 nursery places, giving a total capacity of 480 children.

The proposal gives careful consideration to its effect on Welsh-medium provision within the local authority and the extent to which the proposal supports the targets in the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Monmouthshire County Council's aim is to support and commit to the Welsh Government's national strategy, Cymraeg 2050, which presents a long-term vision for Wales where the Welsh language thrives. The proposal appears to support all of the targets in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. It is noted that if the proposal were to be implemented, Welsh-medium provision would be expanded by providing a school with 420 places, which can provide for two streams. It appears that the Council recognises that it must fulfil its statutory duties to ensure that there is growth in the Welsh language across the county by continuing to develop and improve its Welsh-medium education provision and the benefits it brings.

Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni is the current Welsh-medium primary school that serves the north of the county. The demand for Welsh-medium education has increased across the area since 2015 (from 187 to 241 in September 2023). As a result, it appears that the proposal would have a positive effect on Welsh-medium provision within the area and particularly in Abergavenny.

The local authority has given due consideration to the financial implications of the proposal. Capital funding of around £1 million was agreed during the process. The school will continue to be funded in line with the adopted funding formula, which will allow additional staff to be recruited as the numbers on the school roll increase.

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

The proposal gives appropriate consideration to the impact of the proposals on quality and standards in education. It is likely that the proposal will not affect the quality of learning in any of the English-medium schools in the cluster but will have a positive effect on the young people who attend Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni as they move to a location with a better teaching and learning environment. Teaching and learning experiences will continue to follow Curriculum for Wales, with Welsh as the language of teaching and learning. It appears that the school will continue to receive the appropriate level of challenge and support to ensure that high quality learning is achieved.

In terms of well-being and attitudes to learning, it is likely that the proposed relocation and the increase in capacity will have a positive effect on the community of



Abergavenny who wish to be educated through the medium of Welsh. It states further that the proposal will not have a negative effect on well-being and attitudes to learning in the other schools affected and is likely to have a very positive effect on their teaching and learning experiences as they move to a better environment with excellent teaching and learning facilities.

It is likely that there will be no change in support, care and guidance in the other schools affected. In terms of leadership and management, it appears that there will also be no change in the quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers at the other schools affected. It appears that the leadership team at Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni will continue to receive support and guidance from the local authority and the Education Achievement Service to ensure that best practices in leadership and management are adopted.

The proposal considers appropriate information from Estyn's latest reports for each of the schools that are likely to be affected. Of the six schools, only two were in 'Estyn monitoring'. Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni was last inspected in 2017 and its performance and prospects for improvement at the time were judged to be 'Satisfactory'. The proposal provides a very generic description, with little detail, of the impact of the proposal on the community and on vulnerable groups, including children with special educational needs.

#### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council would like to thank ESTYN for their very much supportive response towards our proposals to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 places through relocation to the former Deri View Primary School site.

The response acknowledges that the Council's proposals are supportive of the proposed improvements to teaching and learning facilities for staff and children involved with Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. It further acknowledges the Councils that proposals are supportive of the Council's published Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the contribution it makes to the Welsh 2050 strategy.

The Council notes the comments made by ESTYN concerning surplus places within the cluster. We acknowledge that our planned growth of Welsh medium education could result in a reduction in the number of children attending English medium schools across the cluster. The Abergavenny cluster is subject to significant housing developments as identified in our latest Local Development Plan (LDP), which we hope will generate additional young people across the cluster and mitigate any concerns around falling numbers on roll. However, this will need to be closely monitored and any appropriate actions taken to ensure that schools across the cluster have sustainable numbers.

The Council also notes the comments concerning the impact of proposals on the community and vulnerable groups, including those with special educational needs. We are confident that these proposals can only impact positively on the local community and vulnerable groups, through providing significant improvements to the teaching and learning environments that are available at the proposed new site. The Former Deri View Primary School provided the cluster with support through its SRB facilities for children whose needs could not be met in mainstream

teaching environments. These facilities remain at the site and can be utilised to benefit the children of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni, as well as provide opportunities for future Welsh medium SRB provision, subject to further statutory consultation processes.

A full community impact assessment has been completed alongside this statutory process and is available under appendix 2

## 8. Assessment of the Proposal

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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 increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 places through its relocation to the former Deri View Primary School site. Following the responses received during the consultation period, the Council has reviewed the impact of proposals on the follow areas:

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

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

**Option 1** – Do nothing and maintain the status quo. This would mean there would be no change to existing provision, and that Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni would remain on its current site with its current published capacity. Following the consultation period there were only a small number of respondents (2) that felt the Council should not be investing in Welsh medium education within the Abergavenny cluster.

The Council has considered the responses and maintains the view that there is a need to improve the teaching and learning facilities for those accessing Welsh medium education within the area, alongside the opportunities to allow for growth of the Welsh language to support the targets in our Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and National Welsh 2050 strategy.

**Option 2** – Build a new Welsh medium Community Primary school in Abergavenny to replace Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. There were a small number of respondents (1) who felt that the ideal solution would be to build a brand new primary school for Welsh medium education within the cluster. Whilst we acknowledge that this would provide the ideal option, the Council do not feel that this is a feasible option to take forward, largely due to there being no suitable sites for the new primary school and

the funding available does not allow for a new build. The former Deri View primary school site will be vacant and provides excellent teaching and learning facilities for the Welsh medium community, whilst offering a prompt solution to relieving the accommodation pressures currently experienced on the current Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni site.

**Option 3** – Increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni on its current site. The Council did not receive any feedback during the consultation stages of this process to support this option. The Council continues to hold the view that the capacity on the existing site cannot be increased to meet the requirements for a two form entry school, and certainly not within the funding that is available. This option would also leave a purpose build 420 place school with excellent facilities vacant.

**Option 4** – Relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to the site formerly occupied by Deri View Primary School. The majority of consultees engaging in this process were supportive of this option.

Our preferred option remains to be option 4, which is to utilise existing accommodation available at the former Deri View Primary School site in order to increase the capacity of Welsh medium education within the area to 420 places. This option is not only the most financially viable but delivers excellent teaching and learning facilities and a prompt solution to relieving the accommodation pressures currently experienced on the current Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni site.

## 8.1 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.

The proposal will not affect the quality of learning in any of the English medium schools in the Abergavenny cluster, however, it will have a positive impact on the young people attending Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni as they move to a location with an improved teaching and learning environment. Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will continue to receive the appropriate level of challenge and support to ensure that high-quality learning is achieved.

### Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

The proposed relocation and associated increase in capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is expected to have a positive impact on the Abergavenny community who wish to be educated through the medium of Welsh. We anticipate that there will be

an increase in parental choice for Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni because the Council will be providing more Welsh medium places in an improved teaching and learning environment.

Pupil wellbeing is a priority and is monitored and reported through school self-evaluation processes and improvement plans. The proposal will not impact negatively on wellbeing and attitudes towards learning at the other affected schools.

#### Teaching and learning experiences

Teaching and learning experiences at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will continue to follow the Curriculum for Wales, with Welsh as the language of teaching and learning. The proposal will not impact the teaching and learning experiences at the other affected schools.

For those currently attending Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni, the proposals are likely to have a hugely positive impact on their teaching and learning experiences as they relocate to an improved environment with excellent teaching and learning facilities.

#### Care support and guidance

Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will continue to be supported by the local authority and the Education Achievement Service to provide high quality care, support, and guidance. There will be no change in care support and guidance at the other affected schools.

#### Leadership and management

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

## 8.2 Impact on the Community

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During the consultation stage of this process, the Council completed and published to consultees an Integrated Impact Assessment which confirmed that proposals will firstly increase the number of Welsh medium places within the Abergavenny community, and secondly provide significant improvements to the existing teaching and learning environments.

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

The Integrated Impact assessment has been reconsidered following the consultation and can be found under appendix 2 or alternatively at [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/school-reorganisation](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/school-reorganisation)

## 8.2 Impact on Travel arrangements

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The Council has undertaken an assessment on the impact of travel arrangements for affected pupils should proposals proceed to relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.

The consultation process did not draw out any concerns relating to the travel arrangements as a result of the proposals moving forward. The proposed new site for the school is located approximately 0.4 miles from the existing site and is therefore not expected to be detrimental to existing travel arrangements.

Home to school transport will be provided to Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni in line with the current policy, which states pupils who attend their nearest or catchment primary school and reside more than 1.5 miles away will be eligible.

Further details of the home to school transport policy can be found on the following link: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/school-transport-home-to-school>

## 9. Recommendations

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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 increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 420 places through its relocation to the former Deri View Primary site. The consultation saw 6 respondents (33%) agreeing with aspects of the proposals, however, after unpicking these responses it is a fair assumption to make that all 6 are supportive of the actual proposal itself but have asked for the Council to give consideration to other factors concerning the provision of Welsh medium education.

The Council has therefore taken forward that 16 out of 18 (89%) responses received from the community are supportive of proposals.

The consultation responses highlighted very few (2) respondents who had concerns towards these proposals. 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 – increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni through its relocation to the former Deri View Primary School site, with effect from September 2025.***

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

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- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of schools affected by the proposal
- The governing body of any school affected by the proposal
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Headteachers of schools affected by the proposal
- Welsh Ministers
- All MCC Town and Community Councils
- All MCC Assembly Members representing the area served by the school
- All Members of Parliament representing MCC area
- All MCC Libraries
- 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
- Welsh in Education Forum

