



# **Newport City Council**

## **School Reorganisation Proposal**

### **Consultation Report**

**Proposal to increase the capacity of Ysgol Bryn Derw by 28 pupil places with effect from April 2022**

**Formal Consultation Period:**  
**21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021**

#### **Purpose**

This report is published in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code, November 2018.

This consultation report includes the following sections:

- The Proposal
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Learner Voice
- Consultation Responses
- Estyn's Response
- Assessment of the Proposal
- Recommendations
- Appendices

## The Proposal

This consultation report concerns a proposal to increase the capacity of Ysgol Bryn Derw by 28 pupil places with effect from April 2022 by using the vacant Kimberley Nursery School building. Refurbishing this site would support the development of additional facilities for Ysgol Bryn Derw, through the creation of a dedicated satellite base, without any detrimental impact on provision at the school, and indeed at any other school within the city.

## Stakeholder Engagement

An invitation to take part in the statutory consultation was issued to the stakeholders outlined below, with a link to the consultation pack on the Council's website sent by e-mail:

- The Headteacher, teachers, staff and the governing body of Ysgol Bryn Derw;
- Pupils at Ysgol Bryn Derw;
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending Ysgol Bryn Derw;
- The Headteacher, teachers, staff and the governing body of Maes Ebbw School
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending Maes Ebbw School;
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils currently attending the Communication Class within Kimberley Nursery School;
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending Learning Resource Base classes across the City;
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils with a diagnosis of ASD and attending placements outside the City;
- The Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all other Newport schools;
- All Newport City Council elected members;
- All Newport Community Councils;
- The Welsh Ministers;
- Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by the school subject to the proposal;
- Other Local Authorities across the South East Wales Consortium region, including relevant Transport departments;
- The South East Wales Education Achievement Service;
- The Church in Wales, Diocese of Monmouth;
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese;
- Estyn;
- Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and staff at Ysgol Bryn Derw;
- The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent;
- Gwent Police;
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service;
- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board;
- Public Health Wales;
- Newport Serennu Centre;
- SNAP Cymru;
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations;
- Preventative Services.

### Affected Schools

The only school directly affected by this proposal is **Ysgol Bryn Derw**.

### Distribution of Information

In addition to the formal (main) consultation document, a Children & Young Persons' version and ASD friendly version were also produced, to help ensure that the consultation process was inclusive and accessible to all concerned. Hard copies of all three documents were provided to Ysgol Bryn Derw. Hard copies could also be requested by emailing [school.reorg@newport.gov.uk](mailto:school.reorg@newport.gov.uk), and these were available bilingually in Welsh and English, although no such requests were received.

### Drop-in Events

Due to the ongoing public health situation, and in keeping with Welsh Government guidance, there were no face-to-face consultation events arranged to support this consultation. Stakeholders were advised that any questions concerning the proposal could be submitted to [school.reorg@newport.gov.uk](mailto:school.reorg@newport.gov.uk) and Council officers would provide a timely reply to ensure that informed responses could be submitted during the consultation period. No questions were received during the consultation period.

### Ysgol Bryn Derw Parent Session

A virtual drop-in session via Microsoft Teams was offered to parents of pupils at Ysgol Bryn Derw by the Headteacher, to allow parents to raise comments or ask questions about the proposal. The session was due to take place on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 between 16:00 and 18:00, and would have been led by officers from the Education Service. However no parents expressed an interest in attending and therefore the event was cancelled.

## **Learner Voice**

The Council is committed to gaining the views of learners, and due to the current public health situation, this was facilitated through pupil Question and Answer sessions held via Microsoft Teams, rather than face-to-face workshops. Details of the sessions conducted are provided in the table below:

<b>School</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Date</b>
Ysgol Bryn Derw	1x Teacher, 8x Pupils (Secondary age group)	05/07/2021
Ysgol Bryn Derw	2x Teachers, 15 Pupils (from 2 classes of mixed Primary and Secondary age groups)	05/07/2021

A number of similar questions were asked and comments raised by pupils over the sessions and these are summarised in the table below:

<b>Question/Comment</b>	<b>Answer</b>
The proposal is a good idea as there will be more space for other children in the school.	Unfortunately the current school can't be made any bigger, so another building will be used for the extra pupils.
The proposal is a good idea as the school will make more money.	The Council is hoping to save money as sending children to schools outside of Newport can be expensive.

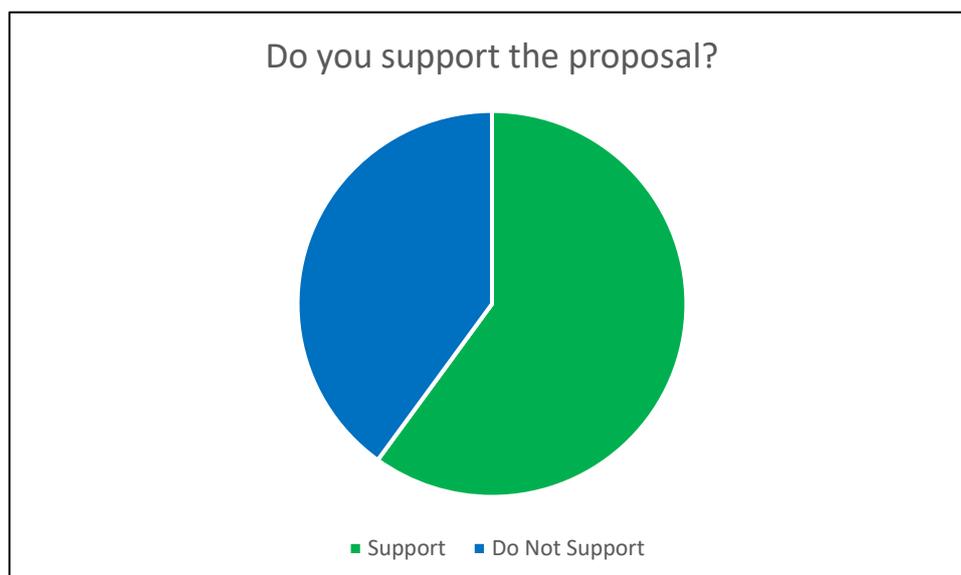
The proposal is a good idea as more children will be able to attend Ysgol Bryn Derw and less children will have to attend schools that are further away.	Yes, this will allow more pupils to attend school closer to their home.
How much is the new school going to cost the Council?	The building works will cost about £1million and the Council has received a grant from Welsh Government for this.
Where are the pupils going to eat lunch?	There will be no dedicated dining hall, therefore the pupils will eat lunch in a shared central area.
Why will the chimney be removed?	Older schools have big boiler systems and need to use chimneys. However the new building will have a new boiler and won't need the chimney any longer.
How big is the new school?	The new building is much smaller than the main school. There will be 3 classrooms with around 7-8 children in each.

In each session, all pupils supported the proposal.

The Council is very grateful to the staff and pupils who took part, and would like to thank them for their valuable contributions to this process.

## Consultation Responses

Overall, a total of 5 responses were received during the consultation period. 3 respondents (60%) supported the proposal and 2 respondents (40%) did not support it.



4 responses were made via the standard response pro-forma (see Appendix A), including one from a parent / carer and one from the Chair of Governors at Ysgol Bryn Derw. (the other two respondents did not disclose their stakeholder group).

In addition, a consultation response was submitted by email from Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales)

### **Comments/Concerns**

A concern was raised by a parent who does not support the proposal:

*"I worry deeply how the current pupils will be affected. Children were already disrupted during the last increase. Pupils do not need any more upheaval."*

In response, the Council would like to reassure parents that as the proposal relates to a dedicated satellite base for Foundation Phase learners joining the school, there will be minimal disruption to current pupils. The Council considers that the benefits of providing additional places outweighs the effect of any possible disruption to current learners at the school.

In her response, the Chair of Governors at Ysgol Bryn Derw confirms that the Governing Body is supportive of the proposal and welcomes the increase in capacity for the school so that appropriate placements with highly skilled and specialist staff can be made available for more children and young people with ASD in Newport.

### **Estyn's Response**

The full response from Estyn is included at Appendix B of this report. However, in summary, the response states that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of educational provision in the area, and that:

- The council lays out a clear rationale for its proposal and shows how the proposal addresses the increasing demand for specialist education provision across the city of Newport.
- The proposer has consulted as widely as possible due to the current pandemic, including with children and young people, parents/carers, school staff, a wide range of interested parties and members of the public.
- The proposal identifies three potential risks associated with the proposal, and suggests their possible impact and the actions the Council could take in order to mitigate the risk.
- The local authority has taken appropriate account of data relevant to the educational standing of the school.

Notwithstanding this, the response also notes some disadvantages which the proposal does not address: the requirement for pupils to transition to a new site when their Foundation Phase education ends; the need for the Headteacher to work across two sites, and the additional responsibilities placed on the Governing Body in managing a split-site school.

### ***The Council's Response***

The expectation is that the pupil experience would be of the same high quality across both sites, and therefore the geographical distance will not be a barrier to provision. To support this:

- A designated member of the school Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for overseeing, directing and supervising the provision at the new site, with this facilitated by an expanded senior team;
- The administration, caretaking and cleaning teams will be expanded to ensure the same quality of provision at both sites;
- Staffing will be arranged under the same pupil-staff ratios as on the main site, and therefore additional staff will be recruited. All new classes will have a consistent staff team, although all staff will be expected to be available to work across both sites as required
- Professional support, such as from therapists and psychologists, will be available on an entirely needs driven basis across both sites, as will in-house specialist staff;
- Pupils based at the satellite provision will have access to a vehicle to transport them to the main site to access facilities such as the Rebound Therapy trampoline.

The Estyn response also notes that the Council has considered the extent to which this proposal supports the targets within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The proposal does not seek to either expand or reduce the availability of Welsh language provision in Newport. However, the proposer does not identify how Welsh speaking pupils with ASD will be supported by the local authority.

### ***The Council's Response***

As Ysgol Bryn Derw is an English-medium school, it has and will continue to follow all aspects of the national curriculum in relation to Welsh as a second language. Under a separate proposal, a Welsh-medium Learning Resource Base will become available at Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli when the school moves to its permanent location in September 2023.

**In conclusion, Estyn confirmed a view that the current proposal will at least maintain the education provision for pupils at Ysgol Bryn Derw.**

## **Assessment of the Proposal**

Following the public consultation period, the Council maintains the view that the proposal represents the best and most achievable solution to the local pressure for specialist education placements for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The proposal is still preferred over the alternative options available:

**Do nothing** – The capacity of Ysgol Bryn Derw would remain at 68. Demand for places in the city will continue to exceed supply, and the Council will have to fund out of county placements and transport. This would be likely to have a negative impact on pupil wellbeing and the environment. The Kimberley nursery building would remain empty until a suitable use could be identified or the building and site sold.

**Expand Ysgol Bryn Derw on the existing school site** - Increase the capacity of the school by building a 4 classroom extension to the existing school. Although this option would provide additional capacity and prevent the need to operate over a split site, the option is not achievable for two reasons:

- 1) This would require significant additional capital investment

2) The current site is not suitable to accommodate an extension due to site topography and its listed status.

**Do more** – Establish a new special school to provide additional places for pupils diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Although this option would potentially deliver more places in the long term, there are several significant disadvantages associated with this option:

- 1) There is no suitable site or building readily available for this purpose
- 2) This option would entail significant capital investment in excess of the available maintenance funding
- 3) This option would require significant additional staff recruitment and higher recurring revenue costs
- 4) This option would take significantly longer to deliver while there is an urgent need to provide additional places.
- 5) The Kimberley nursery building would remain empty until a suitable use could be identified or the building and site sold.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that permission be sought to move this proposal forward by publishing a statutory notice. This decision will be referred to the Cabinet Member for Education and taken through the Council's agreed democratic process.

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In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2018) this report is published electronically on Newport City Council's website at [www.newport.gov.uk/schoolreorganisation](http://www.newport.gov.uk/schoolreorganisation)

To request a hard (paper) copy of this document please contact Newport City Council's Education Information and Development Officer on 01633 656656 or email [school.reorg@newport.gov.uk](mailto:school.reorg@newport.gov.uk)

## Appendix A

### Consultation Response Pro-forma

**This response relates to the proposed expansion of Ysgol Bryn Derw by 28 pupil places with effect from April 2022.**

Your views matter. Please tell us what you think about the proposal by completing this questionnaire. **The closing date for the submission of responses to this consultation is midnight on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Please note that negative responses made to this consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal, they will be recorded as adverse comments. Objections can only be registered following the publication of a statutory notice.

**1) Do you support the proposal to:**

To increase the capacity of Ysgol Bryn Derw by 28 places with effect from April 2022?

Yes  No  In part

**Please use the box below to provide comments or explain which element of the proposal you do/do not support.**

**2) Do you believe that the proposal will have a positive or negative effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language?**

Positive  Negative  No effect

**3) If you think it will have a negative effect, what steps could we take to lessen or remove this and improve positive effects?**

**4) Do you believe that the proposal will treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?**

Yes  No

Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent/carer of a child attending a local nursery)

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Please select your Ethnic group			
White British		Asian-Bangladeshi	
White Irish		Asian-Indian	
Any other White background (please state): _____		Asian-Pakistani	
		Any other Asian background	
Gypsy or Irish Traveller		Black Caribbean	
White and Asian		Black African	
White and Black African		Any other Black background	
White and Black Caribbean		Arab	
Any other Mixed background (please state): _____		Chinese	
		Any other ethnic group (please state): _____	
Asian-Bangladeshi		Prefer not to say	
Asian-Indian			
Asian-Pakistani			

Welsh language			
<b>Do you consider yourself a Welsh speaker?</b>			
Yes		No	Prefer not to say

Caring Responsibilities			
<b>Do you care for children of school age?</b>			
Yes		No	Prefer not to say
<b>Do you care for children of pre-school age?</b>			
Yes		No	Prefer not to say
<b>Do you care for a dependent adult or child above school age?</b>			
Yes		No	Prefer not to say

If you wish to be notified of the publication of the consultation report, please supply your contact details:

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B**

### **Estyn's response to the proposal by Newport City Council to increase the capacity of Ysgol Bryn Derw by 28 places with effect from April 2022.**

#### **Introduction**

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

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

#### **Summary / Conclusion**

The proposal is by Newport City Council to increase the capacity of Ysgol Bryn Derw by 28 places with effect from April 2022 by establishing a dedicated Foundation Phase satellite base using the Kimberley Nursery School building which will become vacant in July 2021.

It is proposed that the work required to refurbish the building will commence in July 2021 and will be complete in early 2022. The additional school places will therefore be available from April 2022. As a result, the capacity of the Ysgol Bryn Derw will increase from 68 to 96 from April 2022.

The council lays out a clear rationale for its proposal and shows how the proposal addresses the increasing demand for specialist education provision across the city of Newport. The demand for places in ASD specialist provision is higher than current provision available within the city. Expansion of the school will reduce the need to provide out of county placements for pupils

The proposer has consulted as widely as possible due to the current pandemic, including with children and young people, parents/carers, school staff, a wide range of interested parties and members of the public.

Estyn is of the opinion that the current proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of educational provision in the area.

#### **Description and benefits**

Newport City Council sets out clearly how the proposal addresses the increasing demand for specialist education provision across the city of Newport.

Ysgol Bryn Derw serves the whole of the city and supports the provision of education for children aged from 3 years to 19 years who have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and associated learning difficulties. The school can currently accommodate 68

pupils, but the October 2020 pupil census shows that there are 71 pupils registered meaning that the school is oversubscribed.

The demand for places in ASD specialist provision is higher than current provision available within the city. Evidence of demand for specialist places over recent years indicates the demand for reception places will consistently exceed the number of places available at Ysgol Bryn Derw under its current capacity arrangements.

The proposal appropriately considers the advantages and disadvantages associated with the expansion of the school by establishing a dedicated Foundation Phase satellite base using the Kimberley Nursery School building. The proposal clearly shows that the expansion of the school will reduce the need to provide costly out of county placements for pupils living in Newport. It would also provide an opportunity for pupils who are currently attending out-of-county provision to re-integrate back into their local area to continue their education. Furthermore, it would reduce travel time for pupils currently attending out-of-county placements. Pupils with ASD who find noisy and busy areas difficult would have access to more space and quieter areas.

The disadvantages identified include transition to a new site when their Foundation Phase ends at the new site, the headteacher working between sites and the governing body responsible for managing a split-site school. The local authority does not identify how it will address these issues.

The council has considered the extent to which this proposal supports the target of the WESP. The proposal does not expand or reduce the availability of Welsh language provision. However, the proposer does not identify how Welsh speaking pupils with ASD will be supported by the local authority.

The proposal reasonably suggests that there will not be a detrimental impact on home to school transport, rather the impact may have a positive impact on learner travel as it will reduce the number of pupil journeys to placements outside of the city of Newport.

The proposal identifies the impact the expansion of the school will have on staffing levels and suggest this can be managed effectively through existing staff recruitment arrangements.

The proposal identifies three potential risks associated with the proposal, suggests their possible impact and actions the council could take in order to mitigate the risk. For example, the proposal identifies that the demand for the provision diminishes as a potential risk. In order to mitigate this risk, they suggest that although this risk is unlikely the school could be adapted to accommodate pupils with other additional learning needs from within the school sector. This section suggests that the council has prepared well to secure the success of the proposal.

The council has identified three other possible options for consideration regarding the proposal, including maintaining the status quo, increasing the capacity of the current school building, and building another special school. They have considered each option's strengths, weaknesses, and risks.

## **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The local authority has taken appropriate account of data relevant to the educational standing of the school. The Council firmly believes that this proposal will have a positive impact on the provision and quality of educational outcomes in the special school sector. They state that Ysgol Bryn Derw is already well-equipped to deliver a full curriculum across all year groups from Nursery to Year 14 and increasing the number of places available within the school community will not have any detrimental impact on this provision.

The proposal considers the likely impact of the proposal on standards, provision and leadership. The most recent local consortium report in 2019 categorised the school as yellow, indicating that the school required a small level of support to improve standards then. The most recent inspection of the school by Estyn in March 2020, evaluated the school's current standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning, care, support and guidance along with leadership as excellent. Teaching and learning experiences were judged to be 'good'.

The local authority believes that the proposal will have no detrimental impact on other Newport schools. They acknowledge that there may be a small impact on out of county providers as the number of Newport pupils requiring specialist placements outside of the city may reduce as a result of this proposal.

The proposer has carried out an equality impact assessment of the proposal and reasonably claims that the expansion of the school will have a positive impact on children with ASD by increasing provision of a rich learning environment. Their Fairness and Equalities assessment clearly states that there is no evidence to suggest the proposal will have a disproportionate impact on pupils with any of the Protected Characteristics listed.