



# **Newport City Council**

## **School Reorganisation Proposal**

### **Consultation Report**

**Proposal to increase the overall capacity of Bassaleg School from 1,747 to 2,050 with effect from September 2023**

**Formal Consultation Period:  
1<sup>st</sup> October – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

#### **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
- Post-consultation assessment of the proposal
- Recommendations
- Appendices

## The Proposal

This consultation report concerns a proposal to increase the overall capacity of Bassaleg School from 1,747 to 2,050 with effect from September 2023.

## 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:

- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending all schools affected by this proposal;
- Pupils attending all schools affected by this proposal;
- Members of staff currently employed at all schools affected by this proposal;
- The Church in Wales, Diocese of Monmouth;
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese;
- Neighbouring Local Authorities across the South East Wales Consortium area;
- The Headteacher and Governing Bodies of all Newport schools;
- All Newport City Council elected members;
- All Newport City Council Heads of Service;
- The local Community Councils;
- The Welsh Ministers;
- Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by the schools subject to the proposals;
- Estyn;
- Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and staff employed at all schools affected by this proposal;
- The Education Achievement Service for South East Wales;
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent;
- Newport's Welsh in Education Forum;
- The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership;
- Newport Serennu Centre;
- SNAP Cymru;
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations;
- Preventative services

Hard copies of the full consultation document and the Everyday Summary Version for Children and Young People were made available to Bassaleg School and cluster primary schools and on request by emailing [school.reorg@newport.gov.uk](mailto:school.reorg@newport.gov.uk) and were provided bilingually in Welsh and English.

## **Affected Schools**

The school directly affected by this proposal is **Bassaleg School**. It is anticipated that pupils from Marshfield Primary School will benefit significantly from the proposal being the farthest cluster primary school to Bassaleg School. However, all pupils attending Bassaleg School will benefit from improved facilities and the expansion would provide improved prospects for pupils in the cluster primary schools to secure admission to the school. For completeness, the consultation was extended to all of the primary schools which make up the Bassaleg School cluster, namely:

- Marshfield Primary School
- Mount Pleasant Primary School
- Rogerstone Primary School
- High Cross Primary School
- Jubilee Park Primary School
- Pentrepoeth Primary School

### Distribution of Information

Hard copies of both the full consultation document and the Children and Young People's Everyday Summary Version were offered to Bassaleg School and the cluster primary schools to be available for staff, pupils and parents. Ten copies of each document were requested by and delivered to High Cross Primary School and Mount Pleasant Primary School. All other schools declined the offer, preferring to access the material online. Further copies of the document were available to be delivered to schools on request. Four requests for hard copy consultation documents were received and sent out accordingly by post.

### 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. A number of questions were received and responded to in a timely manner and Frequently Asked Questions were published, with replies, on the Council's web pages. These are attached at Appendix A.

### Bassaleg School Parent Forum

A Microsoft Teams session was arranged for 6pm on the evening of Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The session was arranged by a parent governor at the school and publicised locally in the same way as other Parent Forum meetings. Four officers from the Education Service and an Assistant Headteacher from Bassaleg School joined the call with the parent governor, but no other parents attended. In case there was a technical barrier preventing parents from joining this meeting, a second session was arranged for Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, this time set up as an Event via *Eventbrite* to track the number of parents planning to attend the session. On the afternoon of the session it was agreed the session would not go ahead as no parents had expressed an interest in attending.

## 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. Due to schools operating in year group ‘bubbles’ it was not possible to involve all members of all school councils. Also, because of the timing of the proposal, some school councils had not yet been established for the new academic year. Details of the sessions conducted are provided in the table below:

School	Attendees	Date
Bassaleg School	1x Teacher, 14x Pupils (Years 9-12)	14/10/2020
High Cross Primary School	2x Teachers, 2x Year 6 Classes	09/10/2020
Jubilee Park Primary School	1x Teacher, 4x Year 6 pupils (including Head Girl and Deputy Head Boy)	16/10/2020
Marshfield Primary School	2x Teachers, 2x Year 6 Classes (including student council Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary)	06/10/2020
	2x Teachers, 2x Year 6 Classes	13/10/2020
Mount Pleasant Primary School	1x Teacher, 1x Year 6 class	09/10/2020
Pentrepoeth Primary School	1x Teacher, 1x Year 6 class	05/11/2020
Rogerstone Primary School	1x Teacher, 4x Year 6 pupils	10/11/2020

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

Question	Answer
When will the project be completed?	It is hoped the new building will be ready to use by September 2023.
What will the building look like?	An artist’s impression of the new building is included within the consultation document. However, this could change as the designs are developed.
Why are you not expanding the current buildings?	Some buildings are around 50-60 years old and some are not in very good condition. We also want to bring all the buildings/classrooms on the school site closer together.
What will happen to the old buildings?	The old buildings will be demolished once the new building is ready.
How and where will pupils work whilst the construction is going on?	The new block will be built where the current all-weather pitch is located. There will be tall fencing around the building site while the work is ongoing. Where possible, most of the noisy works will be completed whilst pupils are not in school.
What classrooms will be in the new building?	The school has worked with the Council on the classroom plans. The new classrooms

	will mostly replace the subject area classrooms that are being demolished.
Will the new canteen be a whole school canteen?	Yes, the canteen will be able to cater for all pupils.
What will happen to the current gyms?	The two gyms in Forge and Griffin buildings will remain.
Will the toilets be unisex?	This will be a decision for the school. The design has to ensure that there are enough toilets provided in the right places.
Will the building be eco-friendly?	Yes, the new building will meet the standards for BREEAM 'Excellent' which is a sustainability award.
How much will the building cost and who is paying for it?	The project has a budget of £28m. This is a joint funded scheme between Welsh Government and Newport City Council.
Why will the expansion cost so much money?	The new building will be big – to accommodate more than half of the school population. Schools are expensive to build. They have to be safe, strong and hardwearing, so this means they cost a lot of money.
If Covid-19 is still around when the works start, will it still go ahead?	Yes, the construction works will still go ahead but the building work may take a little bit longer due to the need for workers to socially distance.

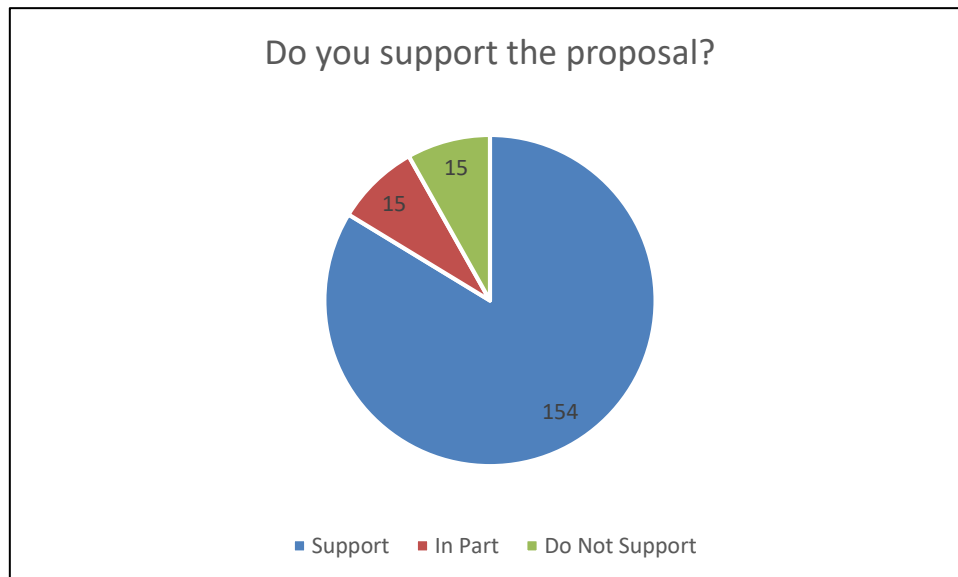
The Year 6 pupils at Jubilee Park Primary School created a slideshow to present to the rest of the class to feedback from the pupil voice session. They facilitated discussions with the class about their ideas and recorded their feedback on the final slide of the presentation (Appendix B).

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 184 responses were received during the consultation period. 154 respondents (equivalent to 84%) supported the proposal. 15 respondents (8%) partly supported the proposal and 15 respondents (also 8%) did not support it.



176 responses were made via the standard response pro-forma (see Appendix C), from the following stakeholder groups:

- Current/past/prospective parents/carers of pupils
- Current/past/prospective pupils
- Local residents of the Bassaleg area
- Teachers and staff at Newport schools
- Governors at Newport schools
- Local Councillors

There were 8 consultation responses submitted by email, from the following stakeholder groups:

- Current/past/prospective parents/carers of pupils
- Local residents of the Bassaleg area
- Headteacher of Bassaleg School
- Parent Governor at a cluster primary school
- Secretary of a local sports club
- Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales)

One of the eight emailed responses was received from the Residents Committee of Court Crescent & Forge Lane and included an attached written response to the consultation. The committee's submission was a ten-page document raising a series of complaints about the current situation, such as antisocial parking issues, traffic congestion, the noise from children playing at break times and pollution. The document also offered alternatives which the group felt were preferable to the proposed expansion of the school. These are included in the response table below. Please note that we have only reported on the negative responses or concerns received.

The table below shows the various comments submitted during the consultation period and the Council's response to these points. A significant number of supportive comments were received, which are not included here.

<b>Concern Raised</b>	<b>Number of Similar Comments</b>	<b>Council's Response</b>
Concerns were raised that the proposal would lead to an increase in traffic in the local surrounding area. Specific issues around school access points, parking, and parental drop off and pick up arrangements were also put forward.	16	The additional capacity is proposed to accommodate pupils living in the new housing developments at Jubilee Park and Tredegar Park Golf Club. Both developments are within easy walking distance of the school, and highways infrastructure for these developments has already been put in place. The Council's Highways Team has acknowledged issues relating to the traffic lights around the Bassaleg roundabout and the likely impact of the pupil and associated staff increase is being assessed and will be addressed within the planning application process for consideration as appropriate. The proposal includes increased parking provision at the front (Forge area) of the site and improved bus waiting and turning areas within the school grounds. Overall the proposal will provide 68 additional parking spaces, 57 of them near the main entrance.
The proposal should not entail any changes to the current catchment areas.	7	Currently there are no plans to change the Bassaleg School catchment area. The proposal would significantly improve the chances of pupils from Marshfield securing places to progress to Bassaleg School
The proposed school population is too big and will impact learner opportunities, behaviour and outcomes.	4	Bassaleg School is a successful and inclusive school. We are confident that the leadership team will be able to ensure the same opportunities and level of support are provided to all pupils. The consultation response received from Estyn supports this view.
The expansion is unnecessary as pupils from Marshfield could attend The John Frost School which is nearer	3	The John Frost School is no closer to Marshfield than Bassaleg School. The John Frost School is also fully subscribed with pupils from within its' own cluster of schools, and cannot be expanded further on its' current site.
The demand for additional places would be better met through the creation of a new secondary school	3	There is no available site for another secondary school, nor would this address the need to replace poor quality accommodation at Bassaleg

		School. Also, the establishment of a new school would have significant revenue funding implications which would adversely impact all secondary schools in Newport.
The proposed increase in capacity is unnecessary and not supported	2	The proposed expansion is required to meet local demand for places. The Council has a statutory duty to provide these places.
Increasing the capacity of the school during a pandemic will add strain to teachers and pupils and should therefore be delayed.	2	The proposal, if approved, would not come into effect until September 2023. Although the long term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is unknown, if we do not act now there will not be enough places for the pupils progressing from primary to secondary education in the short to medium term.
The increased provision is not required as there is already available capacity in other secondary schools across the City,	2	The only school with any spare capacity is Llanwern High School, to the East of the City. The identified demand is in the Bassaleg cluster area, in the West of the City. It is not considered appropriate to bus hundreds of children across the city every day, causing unnecessary stress to learners and adding to pollution and congestion problems.
Changing the age range of the school from 11-18 to 11-16 would create additional places without the need for expansion of the school	1	Newport City Council has been clear in its commitment to a 3-18 model of education delivery. While changing the age range could create additional capacity in our secondary schools for children of statutory school age, alternative Post-16 provision would still have to be arranged and this process would take several years to agree and implement. Meanwhile there is a need to provide additional secondary school places in the Bassaleg area.
There is a risk that the school will need to be expanded again if the population continues to grow.	1	This proposal is to expand the school to 2,050 and there is no intention to go beyond this number. The main housing developments in the catchment area are mostly complete and occupied and the anticipated impact on pupil numbers has been fully considered.
Not enough consideration has been given to alternative options to this proposal.	1	The consultation document details five alternative options that have been considered. These include only replacing existing facilities, expanding another school site and amending current catchment areas. The Council



		does not own sufficient land, or hold sufficient capital reserves, to build a new secondary school. Other options were considered and discounted at the Strategic Outline Case stage, including the delivery of post-16 and sports provision off-site by a third party. The Strategic Outline Case has been considered and approved by Welsh Government.
There is a possibility that the planned construction work will interfere with learning and put pupils at risk.	3	There will inevitably be some disruption on site during the building works. However, these will be completed in phases to limit disruption to specific areas of the school site. Health and Safety of all on site is a priority for the Council and construction areas will be segregated with site hoardings. Where possible the most disruptive works, such as demolition, will be conducted during school holidays. The contractors who are invited to bid for the contract will all have considerable experience of delivering projects on live school sites and of working with schools to ensure pupils are able to learn effectively and safely whilst works are ongoing. Finally the construction environment provides an opportunity for students to witness first-hand the world of work and to see the variety of trades employed on a build project.
The heavy presence of construction vehicles will negatively impact on the local environment	2	Any appointed contractor will be required to submit a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) to the Council's Planning Committee to evidence that all construction related disruption can be effectively managed and the impact minimised. It is anticipated that contractor vehicles will be accommodated within the school site and will not park in the adjacent streets.
The proposed creation of an all-weather floodlit pitch will increase noise and light pollution.	1	Community use of these facilities would take place out of school hours when the school site is quiet. The impact of this use is not expected to be significant and the facility will be a benefit to the community.

The proposed increased pupil number will exacerbate littering issues.	1	Pupil behaviour issues, including any concerns over littering, is a matter for the school leadership team and therefore any concerns should be reported directly to the school.
The proposed new facilities will have a negative impact on the outlook from the neighbouring properties.	1	The proposal involves the construction of one new building and the removal of several others. The Council's Planning Committee will consider the impact on the environment and neighbourhood outlook in determining the planning application.
The provision of additional car parking facilities is unnecessary as staff and pupils should instead be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to and from school.	1	The new car parking facility will be created through the demolition of buildings that are no longer considered suitable for use. The Council will be encouraging staff and pupils to walk, cycle and use public transport to get to the school, however it is acknowledged that there are circumstances where this is simply not possible.

## Estyn's Response

The full response from Estyn is included at Appendix D of this report. However, in summary, the response states:

- The proposer has made it clear that an increase in capacity is needed in response to the opening of a new primary school on a housing development within the school's catchment area.
- The proposal is likely to fulfil its aim of providing sufficient capacity to meet the expected demand from in-catchment families into the future.
- It will also replace much of the existing poor quality accommodation with a fully accessible, modern new-build teaching block with dining and assembly facilities.
- The proposer has consulted widely, including gathering the views of parents, staff and pupils within the school.

The response also notes that it is reasonable to assume that such a major project taking place on-site will inevitably cause disruption to learners, and that it should be made clear how the disruption will be minimised. In response, to this comment, the Council can confirm that Health and Safety of all on site is a priority for the Council and construction areas will be segregated with site hoardings. Where possible the most disruptive works, such as demolition, will be conducted during school holidays. The contractors who are invited to bid for the contract will all have considerable experience of delivering projects on live school sites and of working with schools to ensure pupils are able to learn effectively and safely whilst works are ongoing. Finally the construction environment provides an opportunity for students to witness first-hand the world of work and to see the variety of trades employed on a build project.

In addition, the response makes reference to the fact that the proposal does not specifically mention vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs. In response to this comment, the Council can confirm that although the consultation document does not directly reference vulnerable pupils and those with Special Educational Needs, these pupils are being considered and catered for within the proposal. The school does not have a formal Learning Resource Base or class for pupils with Special Educational Needs, but inclusion and wellbeing are integral to the ethos of the school. Wellbeing provision at the school is delivered through *Thrive, Ready to Learn* and *The Progress Centre* resources which are currently disparate across the school site. The proposal seeks to bring these resource areas together into a central space within the new building, supporting the notion of wellbeing and inclusion as being at the heart of the school community.

In conclusion, Estyn confirmed a view that the current proposal will at least maintain the education provision for pupils in the Bassaleg School catchment area.

## **Post-consultation assessment of the proposal**

The proposal to increase the capacity of Bassaleg School to 2,050 on the existing school site through the replacement of current teaching facilities with a new teaching block, has been re-assessed against alternative options, in light of the consultation responses received from stakeholders. The feedback received did not raise any significant issues that the Council had not already acknowledged. The principal concerns raised were regarding traffic, road safety and the local environment, and the ability of a large school to prioritise and protect pupil wellbeing and learner outcomes.

The consultation document outlined five alternative options:

- 1) Do nothing
- 2) Replace existing accommodation but do not increase capacity
- 3) Provide new accommodation to achieve the increased capacity only
- 4) Increase the capacity of another school
- 5) Change school catchment areas to divert pressure away from Bassaleg School

No information received during the consultation period changes the assessment of the alternative options above, as provided in the consultation document.

During the consultation process, two further alternatives were suggested:

- 6) Establish an additional new secondary school for the Rogerstone area

In response, the Council does not own sufficient land to accommodate a new secondary school, nor the capital resources required to create that new school and also replace poor quality buildings in the existing school estate. Bassaleg School is a successful school which delivers good learner outcomes. The Council believes that increasing the capacity of Bassaleg School offers best value for money and will deliver better learner outcomes than establishing a new school.

## 7) Change the age range of the school from 11-18 to 11-16

In response, Newport City Council has been clear in its commitment to a 3-18 model of education delivery. While changing the age range could create additional capacity in our secondary schools for children of statutory school age, alternative Post-16 provision would still have to be arranged and this process would take several years to agree and implement. Meanwhile there is a need to provide additional secondary school places in the Bassaleg area. Bassaleg School currently provides a successful Post-16 offer, helping pupils to achieve their potential and progress to higher education. It is not clear at this time that changing the age range of the school would not have a detrimental impact on pupil achievement. This option is not therefore considered preferable to the proposal to increase the capacity of the school.

## Conclusion

Having considered the views of stakeholders submitted during the consultation period and revisited the assessment of alternative options, including the two additional options suggested, the proposal as consulted on remains the preferred way forward. This view is supported by the consultation response provided by Estyn and by 84% of the 176 stakeholders who responded during the consultation period.

## 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 Skills 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

### Proposal to increase the capacity of Bassaleg School – Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: This proposal will lead to an increase in traffic in surrounding areas. Roads are already congested, will access points to the school be altered, could staggered start/end times help?**

**A:** The additional capacity is proposed to accommodate pupils living in the new housing developments at Jubilee Park and Tredegar Park Golf Club. Both developments are within one-mile easy walking distance of the school, and highways infrastructure for these developments has already been put in place. The likely impact of the pupil and associated staff increase is being assessed and will be addressed within the planning application process for highways officers to comment as appropriate. Staggered start and finish times could be considered but this would be something for the governing body to propose and consult on.

**Q: There is available capacity in other secondary schools, e.g. Llanwern High. Is there not scope to direct pupils to these other schools?**

**A:** The only school with any spare capacity is Llanwern High School, to the east of the city. The identified demand is in the Bassaleg School catchment, in the west of the city. It is not appropriate to bus hundreds of children across the city every day, adding to pollution and congestion problems.

**Q: Why can't Marshfield pupils go to John Frost and travel less distance to school?**

**A:** The John Frost School is fully subscribed with pupils from within its own catchment area and is no closer to Marshfield than Bassaleg School.

**Q: I am concerned about the construction work interfering with learning and putting pupils at risk**

**A:** There will inevitably be some disruption on site during the building work period, work will be completed in phases to limit disruption to specific areas of the school site. The health and safety of everyone on site is the top priority and construction areas will be segregated from school areas with site hoardings. Where possible the most disruptive work such as demolition will be conducted during school holidays. The contractors invited to bid for the contract will all have considerable experience of delivering projects on live school sites and of working with schools to ensure pupils are able to continue to learn effectively and safely.

Finally the construction environment provides an opportunity for students to witness first-hand the world of work and to see the variety of trades employed on a build project.

# Live feedback from 6L:

- We really like the amount of space we will have both inside and outside
  - We think that the plans give lots of opportunities to develop all areas of learning and experience from the new curriculum
  - We like how much space and resources have been dedicated to creativity and expressive arts
  - We like how much space there will be for learning and socialising
  - We love the use of the outdoor areas!
  - There are a range of opportunities for different sports built into the plans
- 
- How will pupils be able to navigate their way around the school? Interactive maps? App to download with a map?
  - How much influence and involvement will Bassaleg pupils have? E.g. will they be allowed to pick design choices, colour schemes, furniture etc?
  - Is there only 1 lift? Does there need to be more?

## Appendix C

### Consultation Response Pro-forma

This response relates to the proposal to increase the capacity of Bassaleg School by 300 places for pupils aged between 11 and 16 years, with effect from September 2023.

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 12 November 2020.** 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:

Increase the 11-16 capacity of Bassaleg School by 300 places with effect from September 2023.

Yes  No  In part

Please use the box below to provide comments or explain which element of the proposal you 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 and English languages equally?

Yes  No

<b>Please select your Ethnic group</b>			
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			

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

<b>Caring Responsibilities</b>			
<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 D**

### **Estyn's full response to the proposal**

#### **Estyn's response to the proposal by Newport City Council to increase the overall capacity of Bassaleg School from 1,747 to 2,050.**

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 and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

#### **Summary/ Conclusion**

The proposal by Newport City Council is to increase the overall capacity of Bassaleg School from 1,747 to 2,050.

The proposer has made it clear that an increase in capacity is needed in response to the opening of a new primary school on a housing development within the school's catchment area. The proposal is likely to fulfil its aim of providing sufficient capacity to meet the expected demand from in-catchment families into the future. It will also replace much of the existing poor quality accommodation with a fully accessible, modern new-build teaching block with dining and assembly facilities. The proposer has consulted widely, including gathering the views of parents, staff and pupils within the school.

Estyn is of the opinion that the current proposal will at least maintain the education provision for pupils in the Bassaleg School catchment area.

#### **Description and benefits**

The proposal lays out a clear rationale for increasing the capacity of the school. This includes ensuring that all in-catchment primary school pupils have a place at the school, avoiding the need to travel further to an alternative site and possibly separating siblings between different schools. It will also replace older, dilapidated accommodation with a whole school catering facility, dining hall, assembly hall, wellbeing areas, improved sports pitches, better grouping and proximity of subject areas, improved access and additional parking spaces.

Newport City Council have considered four risks to the project and identified mitigating factors for all. The risks include delays in project delivery, sufficient funding, the demand for places decreasing and demand for places increasing beyond the proposed capacity. The Council have also considered 5 options including maintaining the status quo. They considered the strengths and weaknesses of each option and came to the reasonable conclusion that demolishing older parts of the school and building new facilities is the

preferred option. The Council have taken account of learner travel arrangements, and it is reasonable to assume that, as the new school will be built on the current site, the catchment area, admissions and travel policies will remain the same. It does not envisage that the school will affect pupil numbers in other cluster schools.

The proposal has no bearing on plans to develop and promote Welsh language provision. The Council acknowledges that the proposal makes no contribution to the Council's targets in relation to Cymraeg 2050.

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

The Council has taken appropriate account of the educational standing of the school, including its 'green' status within the National Schools Categorisation system. It concludes that as there will be no change to the leadership team and structure at Bassaleg School, the proposal should have a positive effect on standards at the school. The proposer asserts that the considerable investment in new teaching and learning facilities should contribute to improving pupil behaviour and concentration and allow teachers to focus fully on teaching.

The Council describes Bassaleg School as a very inclusive school, with inclusion being a central part of the school's value system. They state that care, support and guidance were judged to have been excellent during the last inspection, and that efforts are focussed on ensuring that the new facilities will enable a continuation of this provision. However, the proposer does not specifically mention vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs in the proposal.

The proposal explains that the new building will be constructed within the existing school site while pupils and staff continue to use the existing facilities. They will move into the new building upon completion, before the demolition of the old buildings. The proposal points out that the more disruptive works will be scheduled for times when the school is closed. However, it is reasonable to assume that such a major project taking place on-site will inevitably cause disruption to learners, and it should be made clear how the disruption will be minimised.