

Report

Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years

Part 1

Date: 21 March 2025

Subject **School Reorganisation Proposal – Establishment of a new primary school at Great Milton Park**

Purpose To move to publish a statutory notice on the school reorganisation proposal “to establish a new primary school for pupils aged between 3 years and 11 years on the Great Milton Park housing development with effect from September 2026”.

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Summary Formal consultation has now concluded on the school reorganisation proposal being progressed by the Council “to establish a new primary school for pupils aged between 3 years and 11 years on the Great Milton Park housing development with effect from September 2026”. The proposal launched in November 2024, with formal consultation running between 11th November 2024 and 22nd December 2024.

A consultation report, which describes in detail the consultation process and the feedback received, has been prepared and accompanies this report. It has also been published on the Newport City Council website and shared with stakeholders. This decision report references the findings, the result of which recommends that the Council moves to publish a statutory proposal. Any legal objections lodged during the statutory proposal period will be considered when making the final determination.

Proposal **To move to publish a statutory notice for a period of 28 days in respect of the proposal to establish a new primary school at Great Milton Park with effect from September 2026.**

Action by Head of Education

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Management Team
- Education Senior Management Team
- Senior HR and Finance Business Partners

Signed

Background

All school reorganisation proposals are undertaken in accordance with Welsh Government's statutory School Organisation Code. Accordingly, formal consultation on the proposal to establish a new primary school at Great Milton Park with effect from September 2026 took place between 11th November 2024 and 22nd December 2024. Following the conclusion of this process, a consultation report was prepared, published on the Newport City Council website, and shared with stakeholders.

Great Milton Park is a new housing development in the Llanwern area of Newport, with outline planning permission for up to 1,100 dwellings. Due to the size of the development, the planning agreement between the developer and the Council includes a requirement for a new 1.5 form entry primary school to serve the new community. This means that there will be 45 pupil places available per year group. The new school will also benefit from a Learning Resource Base providing 10 places for pupils with Additional Learning Needs and a 24 place nursery class able to take 48 children in total over the two morning and afternoon sessions.

The new school is being provided by the housing developer, Redrow Homes PLC, as part of the planning agreement with the Council to meet the needs of the local community and is planned to open in September 2026. By this time however the housing development will not be fully complete, and indeed this is not expected to be the case until 2038. To support this, it is proposed that the new school will be established as a growing school to support the growth of the Great Milton Park development. Taking this approach allows the school to grow in size as the population of the development increases over a six-year period. Under this model, admission to the school would be capped at an agreed rate over the growth period. A similar growing school model has been implemented at two other developer-led primary schools which opened in Newport in recent years.

The Consultation Report concludes that the proposal remains the preferred option to meet the need for additional school places on the Great Milton Park development. Accordingly, the Council is now required to move to the next stage in this reorganisation process, which is the publication of a statutory proposal. During this stage, any stakeholder can lodge a legal objection to the proposal. These legal objections will be considered before a final determination takes place. A copy of the Consultation Report accompanies this report, but there now follows a synopsis of the feedback received.

Stakeholder Engagement

An invitation to take part in the statutory consultation went to an extensive list of stakeholders, by email, with hard copies of all consultation documentation available on request. Hard copies were also provided to the sales office at the Great Milton Park housing development and to two local schools. All documentation was made available bilingually in Welsh and English, and in other languages on request.

Whilst no face-to-face drop-in events were arranged to support this consultation, all documentation and the Council's website noted that questions could be submitted to a dedicated email address at the Council, with a guaranteed response turnaround of 7 days. No such email enquiries were received during the consultation period.

Learner Voice

The Council is committed to gaining the views of learners when taking forward school reorganisation proposals. As such, the Headteachers of five local schools were contacted to offer of specific learner voice sessions, and as a result sessions took place at Milton Primary School, Ringland Primary School and Llanwern High School.

Further information about these sessions, including the questions raised and feedback received from these pupils, is included on pages 3-6 of the accompanying Consultation Report. The Council is very grateful to the pupils who took part in these sessions and would like to thank them for their valuable contributions to the consultation process.

Consultation Responses

Overall, a total of 81 responses were received during the consultation period from a variety of stakeholders; 79 of these were received via the online response pro-forma from a variety of stakeholders, and 2 were written responses from a Trade Union and from Estyn.

The online response pro-forma offered the opportunity for respondents to directly answer whether or not they supported the proposal. In response to this question, 48 out of the 79 respondents (61%) stated that they supported the proposal and a further 22 respondents (28%) stated that they supported the proposal in part. The remaining 9 respondents (11%) stated that they did not support the proposal.

The comments received via the online response pro-forma, alongside responses from the Council to these comments, are included in detail on pages 7-10 of the accompanying Consultation Report.

Trade Union

The response from a Trade Union noted concerns around the affordability of the proposal and the potential impact that it might have on pupil funding across the city, and the long-term impact of a new school on numbers on roll and staffing at other schools. The Council's responses to these comments are outlined on page 10 of the accompanying Consultation Report.

Estyn

The full response from Estyn is included at Appendix B of the accompanying Consultation Report. However, in summary, the response states that the proposal is likely to at least improve the standard of education provision and outcomes for pupils in the area. A summary of the comments included in Estyn's response is detailed on pages 10 and 11 of the Consultation Report.

Financial Summary

Capital

The new school is being provided by the housing developer, Redrow Homes PLC, as part of the planning agreement with the Council to meet the needs of the local community. Under this agreement however, responsibility for the fixtures, fittings and fit-out of the new school remains with the Council. In addition, since the planning agreement was determined, Welsh Government and the Council have introduced new requirements in relation to Net Zero Carbon targets. These costs will therefore be met jointly by Welsh Government and the Council through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme at an estimated cost to the Council of £230k.

Revenue

The growth of the new school will be incremental over a 6-year period, and as a maintained setting, these places will be funded through the school's Individual School Budget (ISB), distributed by the Council according to the prescribed funding formula as follows:

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33
School Name	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Great Milton Park	655	579	161	116	93	91	38

The revenue costs associated with this proposal are currently included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). If these are not funded, the ISB funding available for all other schools will be diluted.

Risks

It is important to identify and manage any project or scheme's exposure to risk and have in place controls to deal with those risks.

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) <i>What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?</i>	Risk Owner <i>Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?</i>
Failure to move to statutory notice	H	L	There has been a full consultation process in accordance with the statutory School Organisation Code. The proposal cannot be progressed without publishing a statutory notice.	Chief Education Officer
More applications than places available in the first year	L	L	The Council's over-subscription criteria will be used to determine priority.	Chief Education Officer
Insufficient applications in the first year	L	L	Funding for growing schools is based on places available rather than places taken, and the growth model is based on some mixed-age classes to operate in the first two years	Chief Education Officer
The temporary governing body having insufficient time to appoint a Headteacher	H	L	The temporary governing body could decide to appoint an Executive Headteacher whilst permanent recruitment is ongoing.	Chief Education Officer

* *Taking account of proposed mitigation measures*

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Corporate Plan
Education Service Plan
Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme

Options Available and considered

Option 1: To move to the next stage in this school reorganisation process, which is the publication of a statutory proposal (notice) for a period of 28 days and is an opportunity for stakeholders to lodge any legal objections against the proposal.

Option 2: To withdraw the proposal following consideration of the feedback received during the formal consultation period and outlined in detail within the attached Consultation Report.

Preferred Option and Why

The preferred option is Option 1. Following conclusion of the public consultation period, the Council maintains the view that the proposal is appropriate and supports the need for additional school places on the Great Milton Park development. The publication of a statutory notice is the next stage in this school reorganisation proposal. This 28-day period will provide all consultees and stakeholders with an opportunity to further consider, and if necessary lodge legal objections to, the proposal.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Capital

The estimated cost of this scheme forms part of the Council's outline proposal for the next stage of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, which was recently approved by Welsh Government. The request to add the programme as an addition to the capital programme is included within the Capital and Treasury Strategy for 2025/26.

Revenue

The revenue funding required for the operation of the primary school will need to be provided through the Council's overall school's budget (ISB). The profiled additional budget requirements to maintain the 'funding per pupil' at current levels have been included within the Council's medium term financial plan (MTFP) for consideration within future budget decisions.

The table included in the financial summary, shows the financial impact of this decision over the life of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and beyond. As the school will open as a growing school it will take 7 years to reach the point of being fully established due to the incremental approach to growth.

If this proposal is approved, there will be an unavoidable requirement to fund the budget impact of this new school, whether or not the proposal for growth within the Council's MTFP is accepted. If increased funding is not made available, it will dilute the current overall school's budget across all existing Newport schools, many of whom are facing significant financial challenges.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The report is compliant with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Welsh Government School Organisation Code, which sets out the process to be followed when making a proposal to open a maintained school. An appropriate consultation has been undertaken. The next step, in accordance with the Code, is to publish a statutory notice setting out the proposal. It is within Cabinet Member delegation to determine whether to publish any statutory notices.

Comments of Head of People, Policy, and Transformation

The Cabinet Member seeks support to move to publish a statutory notice for a period of 28 days in respect to the proposal to establish a new primary school at Great Milton Park from September 2026.

This is in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27, while the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and its five ways of working are supported. The proposal ensures the long-term needs for the area are met ensuring sufficient primary places are available and has been developed through full consultation and engagement with stakeholders and local residents.

A Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment has been developed considering all relevant impacts of the proposal. No direct staffing or HR related issues arise from this report but would need consideration should the proposal move forward.

Scrutiny Committees

None

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

A full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) has been undertaken and is published on the Council's website (available in Welsh [here](#) and English [here](#)).

The Council has a number of legislative responsibilities to assess the impact of any strategic decision, proposal or policy on people that may experience disadvantage or inequality. A FEIA was completed to support the decision to launch this proposal and has now been reviewed to reflect the feedback received during the formal consultation period. It will be reviewed again to support the final determination of this proposal following the publication of the statutory notice. This school reorganisation proposal was undertaken in accordance with the legislation outlined in the statutory School Organisation Code. This Code outlines the key stakeholders that should be consulted with as part of the process, but this is not exclusive, and the Council has extended this list because of feedback received in relation to previous proposals. An invitation to engage in the consultation process was emailed to identified stakeholders. The proposal was also published on the Newport City Council website, and on social media platforms. The consultation documents contained a response pro-forma, and there was an opportunity for any questions or concerns to be submitted. All consultation documents were available bilingually in Welsh and English. During the consultation, pupil voice sessions were facilitated at three local schools. A Consultation Report has now been prepared and published and will be used by the Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years in deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

The FEIA has identified positive impacts of the proposal in relation to *Age* and *Disability*. The establishment of a new school on the Great Milton Park development will support the demand for school places in an area where 1,100 dwellings are expected to be built. The school will be a 1.5 form entry 3-11 provision, meaning there will be capacity for 315 pupils of statutory school age, plus a 24 place nursery class providing 48 places over the morning and afternoon sessions. The proposal will provide a school in this new community, supporting cohesion arrangements for children and families. The new school will be fully accessible for pupils with mobility and sensory impairments. The Council is committed to providing Learning Resource Base (LRB) facilities in all new school builds to support a more inclusive approach for pupils with additional learning needs, therefore a 10-place LRB will be established in the new school.

Whilst no negative impacts have been identified, it is acknowledged that this proposal will not contribute to the Council's targets in relation to Cymraeg 2050. Newport's current Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) proposes to establish more Welsh-medium provision in Newport between 2022-2032. The Council notes that establishing this new school as English-medium could be seen as a missed opportunity towards these targets; however, it believes that establishing another Welsh-medium primary school so close to Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd and so soon after opening Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli and whilst it is still growing, could destabilise the current offer and have a detrimental impact. It is acknowledged therefore that in proposing to open the new school as an English-medium school, Welsh-language provision is not being given the same level of priority in this instance and, on this basis, the Welsh language is being treated less fairly. Measures being taken to mitigate this impact are outlined in part 3 of the FEIA.

The sustainable development principle and 5 ways of working set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act have been considered as outlined below:

- Long term: the importance of balancing short- term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs. **The proposal seeks to establish a new school on the Great Milton Park development. The development has outline planning permission for up to 1,100 dwellings, and the planning agreement between the developer and the Council includes a requirement for a 1.5 form entry primary school to serve the site. The proposal seeks to establish the school as a growing school allowing the school population to grow over a six year period as the development population grows. This arrangement will allow the school to grow incrementally over a six year period capping numbers in the first five years. The growing school model mitigates the risk that the school could prematurely reach its maximum capacity with out-of-catchment applicants or that the new school has a detrimental effect on pupil numbers in existing schools in the surrounding areas. Great Milton Park is a permanent development in Newport and the school will be established to meet the needs of the**

community for the foreseeable future. The life expectancy of the new school building is at least 60 years.

- **Prevention:** How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help us meet our objectives. **Establishing a new school to serve the Great Milton Park development will ensure a sufficiency of primary pupil places in the area, thereby contributing to the Council's statutory duty. The growth model also increases the possibility of siblings being able to attend the same local school.**
- **Integration:** Consider how the proposals will impact on our wellbeing objectives, our wellbeing goals, other objectives, or those of other public bodies. **A formal statutory consultation has been carried out and the proposal is supported by a FEIA. This proposal supports the "A prosperous Wales", "A more equal Wales" and "A Wales of cohesive communities" Well-being Goals and has no adverse effect on any of the other Well-being Goals. In addition, this proposal supports the Gwent Public Services Board's Well-being Plan 2023-28 and One Newport Local Action Plan 2023-28, and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act's Wellbeing Goal to create a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.**
- **Collaboration:** have you considered how acting in collaboration with any other person, or any other part of our organisation could help meet our wellbeing objectives. **A formal consultation has been carried out with the opportunity for engagement with all stakeholders, supported by a FEIA. The school is being designed and delivered by Redrow Homes PLC, the developers at Great Milton Park, on behalf of and in collaboration with the Council and with support from Welsh Government through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.**
- **Involvement:** The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the City we serve. **The Council has engaged with stakeholders affected by the proposal by issuing an invitation to participate in the consultation and supporting access to all consultation documentation. This included learner voice opportunities facilitated through the Headteachers of three local schools. Following conclusion of the formal consultation period, a Consultation Report has been prepared, published, and distributed to all identified stakeholders.**

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not applicable

Consultation

Stakeholder consultation has taken place as outlined in the attached consultation report.

Background Papers

Consultation Report

FEIA

Welsh Government School Organisation Code – second edition (November 2018)

Dated: 21 March 2025