

Marshfield Community Council

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YOUR URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED ON THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE BASSALEG SCHOOL CATCHMENT GUARANTEE Newport Council's deadline for comments: FRIDAY (1st March)

Newport Council are proposing to remove the school catchment guarantee for all Newport schools from 2014 and implement a "distance from school" policy when secondary school applications from within catchment exceed the places available. With the proposed new 700 unit housing development on the old Alcan site in Rogerstone and the inevitable number of children entering Bassaleg school, this has serious potential consequences on the communities of Marshfield, Castleton and Peterstone.

Irrespective of whether you have school age children, your community will suffer as a result of this proposed change and we urge you to comment on the policy before Friday 1st March please.

- To view the policy, go to www.newport.gov.uk/haveyoursay
- Email your comments to school.admissions@newport.gov.uk (including your name and address)
- Or write to School Admissions, Newport City Council, Room 425w, Civic Centre, Newport, NP20 4UR
- Individually worded responses carry more weight than identically worded ones. Please put these objections in your own words and don't cut and paste.

Reasons to object to the removal of catchment guarantee and distance from school policy:

- Marshfield is in a unique geographical position on the westerly border of Newport LEA so our children have no choice but to travel a minimum of 2.5 miles to the nearest Newport secondary school. We cannot go west into Cardiff LEA. This places us at an immediate disadvantage when competing for Bassaleg places, particularly if further residential development occurs within catchment and nearer to the school. Is this fair for communities on the Authority outskirts?
- Newport Council is proposing a blanket policy on catchment guarantees and not using the discretionary guidelines that would acknowledge and address the unique position that the Marshfield community is in.
- Marshfield is a rural area unlike most other Newport catchments, and successive generations of families have attended Bassaleg for nearly 100 years. Historical and emotional ties will be broken.
- There is historic anecdotal evidence of a legal agreement put in place by Lord Tredegar when he gifted land for the building of Marshfield Primary School and Bassaleg High School that Marshfield children would always be guaranteed educational provision in these schools.
- The policy will lead to splits in our close knit community. Our children will be separated from their peers and depending on where they live in the Marshfield ward, could find themselves in any one of the six Newport secondary schools depending on where there is capacity and not the nearest.
- Sending our children to a host of schools could lead to a competitive situation in the village and potential disharmony and conflict in our community. Splitting our community will have an adverse effect on community spirit and our community events could cease.

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Further reasons to object to the removal of catchment guarantee and distance from school policy:

- Young families are unlikely to stay in or move to the village if there is uncertainty around school catchments affecting the future of our villages.
- No information has been given on the capacity of alternative schools to accept any pupils who are refused admission to Bassaleg. How do Newport Council intend to ensure that secondary education provision for Marshfield Primary School children meets the forecasted population growth and increased housing development?
- Marshfield residential development has contributed a significant amount of S106 money to Bassaleg school over the past 25 years and our children are potentially not going to get the benefit of this. How will Newport Council rebalance this to continue to support the children of Marshfield?
- What S106 contribution is being requested by the developers of the Alcan site in Rogerstone to meet the increased demand for Bassaleg school, so that those currently within catchment (in Marshfield) will not be denied places? How does Newport Council propose to allocate this money?
- This policy could result in school transport being provided to take our children to multiple school locations. How can this make economic sense for Newport Council?
- More school transport means more congestion on our already congested Marshfield Road.
- Newport Council have had 6 months from 1st September 2012 to consult on this policy. During this time they have consulted with 4 other Bassaleg catchment primary schools. However, they only chose to consult with Marshfield Primary on Friday 8th February as the school broke for half term, writing to Year 5 parents only, and effectively giving the Marshfield community less than 3 weeks to respond before the consultation deadline of 1st March. It is questionable whether WAG consultation guidelines have been correctly followed.

More information can be found on the home page of www.marshfieldcommunitycouncil.org

Your comments to Newport Council on this schools admission policy are just as important to our community as your comments were on the proposed gypsy and traveller site. All our comments made a difference then and they can now. Please, please send in your individual comments by Friday, and spread the word! This affects everyone in Marshfield and Castleton, not just those with young children.