

INFORMAL CONSULTATION FOR A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BARNSTAPLE

A new school with nursery is planned to serve south west Barnstaple.

The Diocese of Exeter Board of Education is informally consulting to determine the local level of support for the school to be a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and Nursery,

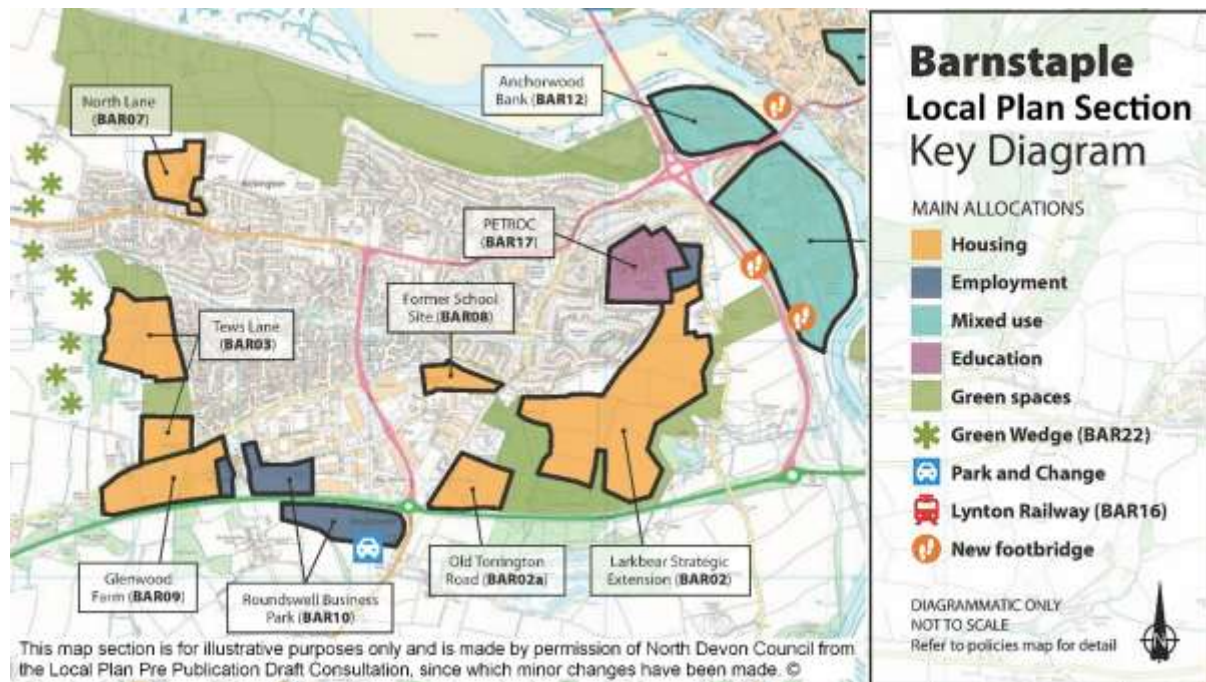
Please read the following information and give us your views. The closing date for this informal consultation has been extended until 5pm on September 25th.

The need for a new primary school

Residential development in south west Barnstaple is projected to increase by about 1,500 dwellings over the next few years - and will continue to grow as shown on the map below.

Devon County Council's Local Infrastructure Plan has identified the need for a 420 place primary school plus 52 place nursery to serve the area. The new school is planned for 2017-18, although this is dependent on many factors.

Key development areas for south west Barnstaple.



More detailed information can be found within the emerging [North Devon Local Plan](#) and [Devon County Council's Education Infrastructure Plan 2013-2031](#)

Why a Church of England School?

Currently, there is no Church of England School option for parents of primary-aged children to the west of the River Taw in Barnstaple. Consequently the Diocese of Exeter has prioritised establishing a Voluntary Aided (see below) Church school in the area.

The new school and nursery will serve the established communities of Roundswell and Sticklepath and the planned areas of new growth. It has the potential to be the focus of a vibrant and growing community.

[The Diocese of Exeter's School Strategy](#) outlines how the Diocese will support those who engage with us in the task of education and developing the knowledge, skills, awareness, and character of young people.

About Church of England Schools

The Church of England is a major provider of schools. Nationally, almost one in five primary aged school children are educated in a Church of England primary school.

There are currently 130 Church of England schools in Devon of which over 80% are judged by Ofsted to be *Good* or *Outstanding*.

The Church of England's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) address issues such as Teaching and Learning, Employment, Funding and Admissions. In summary, a new Church of England School in south west Barnstaple would provide an education which is distinctly Christian while following the national curriculum and treating all children equally regardless of their faith.

A new Church of England School in south west Barnstaple would follow the practice of other schools in the Diocese of Exeter in adopting a religious education curriculum which includes teaching about, and encouraging the understanding of, the world's major faiths, beliefs and practices.

It would have continued emphasis on promoting a caring approach to teaching, encouraging good behaviour and developing a sense of right and wrong. It would seek to recognise the special gifts of each individual. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all will be fostered within a Christian environment and links with the local church will be nurtured.

A new school would pursue the highest standards of achievement and personal development within an environment that values the unique talents of each child and adult associated with the school.

The school would display a strong commitment to social cohesion as the local community grows and develops. The Impact of Church Schools in promoting community cohesion is reviewed in the document [Strong Schools for Strong Communities](#)

About Voluntary Aided Schools

Voluntary Aided (VA) schools are an integral part of the maintained schools system. The Governing Body comprises elected staff and parent Governors but with Governors appointed by the Church Foundation being in the majority. Together, the Governors have a wider remit than in other maintained schools with responsibilities extending to admissions, premises and the RE syllabus. Voluntary Aided schools work closely with the Local Authority and Diocesan Board of Education. There are currently no VA schools in Barnstaple – the nearest one being Swimbridge Primary.

Parental Choice and Impact on Neighbouring Schools

It is not the intention of the Diocese that the school will accommodate pupils from other areas of Barnstaple. However, this does not prevent the rights of parents to express a preference.

The Diocese of Exeter and the school's Senior Leadership Team will work in close partnership with Devon County Local Authority to ensure the school's development and growth is mindful of the potential impact on school places in neighbouring areas.

The Church in Education

The church has a long tradition of providing education in England. The first Church of England Voluntary Aided School in the Diocese of Exeter (Sidwell Primary) was established in 1665, with the most recent planned to open in Exeter in 2016-7.

Proposed Admission Arrangements

This Church of England Voluntary Aided School would be a community school in its widest sense, open to all pupils in the local community of any religious faith or none, and its admissions procedures would follow those of the Local Authority as regards priority places. It is not the intention of the Diocese of Exeter that faith will feature in the admissions criteria.

The Diocese and Governing Body would work with the Local Authority to manage the planned admission numbers at the school so as to match the growth in pupil population locally, whilst operating within the statutory Admissions Code.

Next Steps

Please let us know your views by 5pm on 21 August using this link to our online survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8KBSJQH>

All comments will be properly considered by the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education but we regret that we will not be able to respond to individual points raised. The comments received will influence the proposal's development.

If, after this informal consultation, the proposal proceeds, there will be a Formal Consultation along with a Public Notice as required by legislation. Please feed into this – even though it may seem like duplication, it is an important part of the process.

The decision about whether the new school will be a Church of England Voluntary Aided School will be made by Devon County Council following the Formal Consultation and Public Notice.