



Torpoint Schools Consultation

Cornwall Council is seeking your ideas, feedback and views on a range of proposals it is putting forward, which aim to address issues around the sufficient, suitable and sustainable education provision within Torpoint and its immediate locality.

This pre-publication consultation forms part of a wider, formal consultation process, which is outlined in detail below.

During the pre-publication consultation, we aim to:

- highlight what the issues are and why they have arisen
- set out a range of initial proposals that have been formed on the basis of early discussions and upon which the Council is seeking your feedback
- provide you with information around how you can find out more about those proposals, ask questions and put forward your own views and ideas
- outline the statutory processes that need to be followed in order to decide on any proposals aimed at addressing the issues, and to implement them

Please be assured that, at this early stage in the process, Cornwall Council is very much focused on explaining the **‘why’** rather than determining in any detail, the **‘what.’**

Final and full proposals, upon which further representations will be sought; will be influenced by the outcomes of this initial pre-publication consultation exercise.

Why is Cornwall Council asking me what I think about this issue and these proposals?

Cornwall Council is keen to offer stakeholders (including, in this case, parents and carers of school-aged children), local residents and its employees the opportunity to help inform and influence Council decisions about changes that affect them.

It also gives those groups the opportunity to shape services that are relevant and important to them.

The Council regularly undertakes consultation and engagement on proposed changes to the delivery, policy and cost of Council services.

Why is Cornwall Council concerned about the sufficiency, suitability and sustainability of education provision within Torpoint and its immediate locality?

Globally, there has been a decline in birth rate which is now directly affecting the number of children attending Torpoint Nursery and Infant School (TNIS) and Carbeile Junior School. This is having an impact currently and, according to our population forecasts, will likely continue to do so in the years to come.

TNIS and Carbeile Junior School have a combined capacity for 850 primary-aged children. However, this time last year there were only 500 primary-aged children living within Torpoint, meaning those two schools are already operating well below capacity, even if every child from the local area attended one or the other of those schools.

By this time next year, this number is expected to decline further to around 400 primary-aged children living within Torpoint. Further ahead, projections show that TNIS is likely to have 33 Reception aged children in the 2027-2028 academic year and 34 Reception aged children in the following 2028-2029 academic year.

In the past, both schools would have admitted cohorts of between 60–80 children in a single year group. Current projections therefore represent a significant decline in the number on roll.

With these population forecasts in mind; TNIS will likely have only 5 out of the 13 classrooms in the school being used in the 2027-2028 academic year. Similarly, Carbeile Junior School, is likely to be using just 9 out of its 16 classes in the same period.

Because school funding is closely linked to pupil numbers, a reduction of this size has a major impact on the budgets of both schools. A reduction of one child equates to roughly £4,000 from the core budget (without taking into account any additional funding which might be child-linked).

While the number of children, and consequently budget, decreases, the essential running costs of the school, such as heating, lighting, and maintaining the building, remain much the same.

Additionally, a decline in pupil numbers, and a subsequent reduction in funding, presents difficulties for a school in appointing staff and delivering the full range of curriculum opportunities to pupils. For example, reduced funding results in fewer teachers and teaching assistants and less flexibility around group sizes.

Low pupil numbers can also impact on leadership capacity and the workload of staff. This means both schools need to consider how best to use their resources, so that they can continue offering the same high-quality education that the children of the Torpoint community deserve.

What initial proposals have already been considered as viable options for addressing these issues and is there a current preferred route?

The senior leadership teams and governing bodies of both TNIS and Carbeile Junior School, together with Officers of Cornwall Council's Education Effectiveness Team, have met and shared key information to enable initial, viable proposals to be put forward; and to exclude any proposals which would not be viable under any circumstance.

Following this initial activity; the following proposals have been identified as viable options, within this early pre-publication stage.

Please note, whilst general observations and implications are highlighted in each case; these have not been fully explored at this early stage. The purpose of the pre-publication consultation is to draw further comment and question on these proposals, to enable decisions to be made and proposals refined):

1) Do nothing

Whilst inaction does not appear, at first glance, to address the issues arising; it is feasible that the population of both schools might increase due to unforeseen, or at this stage unknown to the Council, factors such as inward migration, new housing developments or large scale business opportunities that might arise within the local area that draw in working families.

Whilst it is impossible to forecast with any degree of certainty whether those things will happen and whether, consequently, this will lead to an increase in the pupil populations of both schools; based on the current evidence available to us, we do not consider this to be a likely scenario.

However, Cornwall Council are open-minded to hearing opposing views with a strong evidence base.

2) Amalgamate TNIS and Carbeile Junior School on a Single Site

Cornwall Council's preferred option at this stage is to merge TNIS and Carbeile Junior School and deliver nursery, infant and junior phase education provision across a single site.

Due to capacity, physical layout, outdoor space and supporting local infrastructure, we believe this provision would most likely be sited on the existing Carbeile Junior School site; however, this would be subject to a full survey and scoping works.

In addition, there would likely to be changes to the physical layout of any agreed site to accommodate an extended age range; changes to governance and senior leadership structures and other staffing and curriculum changes.

Although this option does not create a 'new' school; there would be an opportunity for a merged school to rename and rebrand itself to better reflect its pupil population.

3) Relocate TNIS onto the Carbeile Junior School site, but retain the two schools' separate identities

A further proposal, principally geared towards reducing premises costs, is to accommodate both schools on the larger Carbeile Junior School site; but to retain their separate names, identities, individual school numbers and governance, leadership and staffing structures.

Implications of this proposal might include consideration of land ownership and boundaries, physical site layout and access, and budget implications around shared costs.

4) Close both TNIS and Carbeile Junior School and open a new free school (an academy) on the Carbeile Junior School Site

On the ground, this proposal would feel very similar to Proposal 2 above; however, the current Department for Education policy is that any new school must be a 'Free School' and therefore an academy. Academies are state-funded schools that are independent of local authority control and receive their funding directly from the government. You can read more about the Government's Free School Presumption (attached)

The presumption process is the main route by which local authorities bring about the establishment of new schools to meet the need for additional places.

Whilst this need cannot be established in this case, the presumption would apply should the proposal be to close two maintained schools and open a new single nursery and primary provision.

What guidance is available to support the process?

Statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) (attached) supports Proposers and decision makers when decisions need to be made which may involve the opening, closing or amalgamating of schools. The guidance is to ensure that good quality school places are provided where they are needed, and that surplus capacity is removed where necessary.

The statutory guidance outlines a five-stage process that needs to be followed:

- Consultation (p.29)
- Publication (p.30)
- Representation (p.31)
- Decision (p.31)
- Implementation (p.33)

For the avoidance of doubt, Cornwall Council is both the 'Proposer' and the 'Decision Maker'.

We have planned the process according to the following key dates and milestones:

Stage 1: Consultation	Pre-Publication Consultation Period	Friday, 9 January 2026 to Friday, 6 February 2026
Stage 2: Publication	Consideration of Feedback from Consultation and Drafting of Full Proposals	Monday, 9 February 2026 to Friday, 27 February 2026
	Full Proposals Published	Monday, 2 March 2026
Stage 3: Representation	Formal Representation Period	Monday, 2 March 2026 to Monday, 30 March 2026
Stage 4: Decision		Friday, 3 April 2026
Stage 5: Implementation	Preparation works in line with Stage 4 Decision to begin on Monday 6, April 2026 . The date upon which any changes will take effect will be outlined in the final Decision; however, with the exception of 'doing nothing' the Council does not envisage any other proposals to take effect before September 2027.	

How can I learn more about the range of options being considered, feedback my views and ask any questions I might have?

We would like to hear your views on the formative proposals outlined above which Cornwall Council is committed to conscientiously considering before forming a full proposal.

There are two ways you can do this:

Complete our Survey - <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/torpoint-schools>

The survey which has been designed to enable you to feedback your comments and questions relating to the initial proposals Cornwall Council has put forward to address issues around the sufficient, suitable and sustainable education provision within Torpoint and its immediate locality; as well as submit any of your own ideas.

Stakeholder Meetings

In addition to the survey, two meetings have been arranged where you will have an opportunity to hear more about the initial proposals put forward, hear answers to frequently asked questions and share questions and ideas of your own.

These meetings will be led by Officers of Cornwall Council and representatives of the schools' senior leadership teams and their governing bodies will also be present.

Meetings will be held at Carbeile Junior School on:

- Tuesday, 20 January 2026 at 10.00
- Tuesday, 20 January 2026 at 16.00

Please may we take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your engagement in this important part of the consultation process and supporting the Council in making decisions that affect you.

If you would like this information
in another format please contact:

Cornwall Council, County Hall

Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY

Email: **equality@cornwall.gov.uk**

Telephone: **0300 1234 100**

www.cornwall.gov.uk