

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**24 MARCH 2022**

### **REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

**APPLICATION NO:** 21/1517/08 (GD)  
**APPLICANT:** Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council  
**DEVELOPMENT:** New Welsh medium primary school, MUGA, sports field, car park, landscaping, and associated infrastructure works.(revised transport assessment, travel plan and phasing sequence plan along with a safe routes to school assessment received 28th January 2022).  
**LOCATION:** HEOL Y CELYN WELSH PRIMARY SCHOOL, HOLLY STREET, RHYDYFELIN, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 5DB  
**DATE REGISTERED:** 16/11/2021  
**ELECTORAL DIVISION:** Rhydyfelin Central

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**REASONS:** The principle of the proposed development is entirely compliant with planning policy and all material planning considerations in this case. It is also consistent with the broader Council objectives for renewal of education provision across the County Borough in accordance with the Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme

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#### **REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE**

- The application has been submitted by, or on behalf of the Council or involving land owned by the Council, where the Council's interest is of more than a minor nature.

#### **APPLICATION DETAILS**

This planning application seeks the complete redevelopment of the Heol Y Celyn site. The existing school will be demolished and a new school built on the western part of the site that is currently occupied by a grassed playing field.

The new school takes the form of an inverted L and would comprise -

Ground floor: 2 no. nursery classrooms & 8no. classrooms with shared lobbies and W.C's, Hygiene & sick bay, server room, multi-use room, lift,, office, head teacher office, changing facilities, PE store, general, cleaner and caretaker stores, plant room, hall store, hall, kitchen, kitchen storage, office, changing and WC facilities along with access, stairwells, circulation and shared learning space.

First floor: a further 8no. classrooms with shared lobbies and WC's, learning resource centres, staff room, storage and toilet facilities, a multi-use room and general circulation space.

The Ground floor area will comprise 1798.5 square metres of floorspace and the first floor 1085.9 square metres of floorspace. The two storey element is aligned east to west on the northern part of the existing playing field and measures 58.8m x 19.4m x 10.7m high at the ridge and 7m high at the eaves. The single storey element projects southwards from the two storey element with dimensions of 35m x 21m (Max). The roofscape on this element of the development is more complex with an initial ridge height of 4.8m falling to 3.6m at the eaves until the main hall that has a differing mono-pitch roof raised to a ridge height of 7.8m falling to 5.4m that provides the hall with an element of high-level clerestory lighting. The school will be finished in combinations of brickwork, wall cladding and render, with aluminium framed windows. The roof will be a standing seam steel roof overlaid with photovoltaic cells. Ventilation louvres and bat boxes will also be built in to the walls.

The location of the existing school will be redeveloped to provide improved access circulation and parking facilities for the new school. This will comprise a total of 41 car park spaces and 6 coach spaces. Access to the site will be from its north eastern corner directly from Holly Street and ramped access will be provided from Holly Street to the school entrance at a 1:22 gradient.

The remainder of the site currently occupied by school buildings would be given over to the provision of a mini football pitch and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The southernmost elements of the site will facilitate much of the redesigned landscaping of the site along with ecological habitat enhancement and aspects of the Sustainable drainage arrangements that will serve the development, (Swales, tankage and drainage basin).

The application is accompanied by the following:

- Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement
- Pre Application Consultation Report
- Drainage Strategy
- Flood Consequences Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Tree Survey
- Geotechnical/Geo-environmental Investigation

## **SITE APPRAISAL**

The application site lies within the existing site boundaries of Heol Y Celyn Primary School and its associated playing fields and outdoor space, which in total covers an area of slightly more than 3 Hectares of land. The school site is located within a residential area of Rhydyfelin and on three sides abuts residential development of varying ages. To the east of the site boundary lies the Nant Lonydd watercourse.

Further to the east is the Rhydyfelin Children's Centre some 20 m beyond the site boundary, with the Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School beyond that.

The application site is formed in the existing plateau area though the level of the land declines steeply from Holly Street and declines further towards the southern border of the site. The existing school buildings are largely single storey with some two storey elements included. The western and southern boundary area comprise hedgerow and tree planting as does much of the northern embankment as it climbs towards Holly Street. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is from Holly Street close to the north eastern corner of the site.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

06/1709	5no. temporary mobile classrooms	Approved 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2006
03/1923	New early learning centre including day-care nursery & playground	Approved 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2004
89/0867	Mobile classroom	No Objection 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 1989
79/0303	Mobile classroom	No objection 14 <sup>th</sup> March 1979

## **PUBLICITY**

The application has been advertised by way of press notice site notice and neighbour notification letters and this has initially resulted in 32 submissions expressing the following concerns/objections. On resubmission of additional details a further full round of public consultation generated a further three objections.

## **Procedural Issues**

- When was the Transport Assessment added to the planning portal as it was not available when initially viewed if added later the planning notice should be resubmitted.
- Not all of the information submitted in respect of the application has been submitted accurately most notably the Transport Assessment.
- In respect of neighbour and community consultation is it considered that the options consultation conducted by RCT Education was relevant to the planning application process? Could this options consultation be cited as fulfilling the requirements of a proper neighbour and community consultation if residents were not considered consultees under this process as it is stated that they are to be consulted as part of the Planning application process?

*Following re-consultation the following points have been made*

- Some of the plans have been updated to show car drop off points but not all of the documents have been updated should all of the documents be updated and resubmitted?
- If officers are minded to approve the plan, it should then be considered by the planning committee following a proper site visit.

### **Planning Application Matters**

- The description in existing use is incorrect as the school is currently English & Welsh medium
- Why do additional documents need to be submitted in respect of protected species, important sites/habitats or biodiversity features and not features of geological conservation or importance?
- Will the attenuation pond be fenced?
- On protected and priority species why do additional documents need to be submitted for “a” but do not for “b and c”

### **Highways & Transportation**

- Holly Street is an arterial route through Rhydyfelin accommodating residential traffic within the village, private and commercial traffic travelling to and from the Gellihirion Industrial Estate, Tesco and Aldi in Upper Boat, traffic to and from Cardinal Newman School and it lies on a public transport route.
- Traffic surveys were undertaken during Covid 19 period where traffic levels had not returned to normal and as such, it is flawed/unrepresentative.
- The submission mentions relatively low levels of pupils being dropped off from private vehicles and to suggest that only 20% would use this method with the remaining 80% walking or public transport is unrealistic.
- The traffic survey has no recognition of the hilly geography and the impact it will have in encouraging people to use cars rather than walk.
- Is a safer routes to school pedestrian audit included?
- Rhydyfelin already experiences severe issues relating to illegal and inconsiderate parking, especially vehicles parked too close to junctions, parking across driveways etc.
- The problems are exacerbated by the failure The South Wales Police and Rhondda Cynon Taf to take ownership of illegal/unlawful parking and this needs to be resolved before the school is redeveloped
- Holly Street residents need to be reassured that the practice of parents parking up on street and in tandem with the vehicles of residents to pick up/drop off will be prohibited should the plans go ahead.
- Cars are frequently parked on the pavement outside of the flats to the south of the school – if they parked on street it would create a singular direction of flow of traffic.
- The school as it is already creates congestion problems at the start and end of the school day as does the nearby Cardinal Newman School and nursery behind Holly Street (pre Covid the problems were worse). Despite it being a village school, problems already exist particularly with traffic parking across drives, close to junctions obstructing views and making manoeuvring difficult/dangerous.

- Opposite Cardinal Newman School and further along Dynea Road there are two sheltered housing complexes, both attract daily visitors and residents have mobility and other problems and increased traffic will make it impossible for residents to go out independently.
- Given current levels of congestion, how will the streets cope with additional use generated by the schools?
- If consideration is being given the preventing residents parking outside their own homes through a Traffic Regulation Order, where will people park during those times?
- In addition to Heol Y Celyn, Cardinal Neman Secondary School also has a number of buses passing through Holly Street and the buses park up through the school day in the locality causing congestion.
- Lime Street as an access to the site is not wide enough to accommodate bus traffic alongside current pedestrian and vehicular traffic. This presents parking problems for residents and for those who use the street as a route to local shops.
- What consideration has been given to emergency service vehicles that pass through the village and the increased congestion that they will face, which are the same as those faced by refuse vehicles and delivery drivers.
- Parents already park illegally on double yellow lines and increased numbers will exacerbate this problem, as will the lack of designated pick up/drop off points in the development.
- A better scheme for drop off/pick up is needed, there are no arrangements for parents to drop off/pick up their children on site or residents consider the plans unclear on this point – a better solution is needed.
- There is insufficient space on site for the number of staff necessary to run the school and visitors
- There is no reference to charging points for vehicles.
- Traffic surveys were undertaken in July when 2 years at Cardinal Newman were not in attendance
- The Council is unaware of the actual number of children that will be using school transport. Parents at Pont Sion Norton have not been consulted on how their children will be getting to school, many might not use school transport, while other might to drop off for breakfast club or drop children off on their way to work. This means that the impact of traffic from the proposed development on the local community has not been properly assessed.
- The transport aspect of the proposed development requires proper and full assessment without excellent plans in place matters will become worse for local residents impacting adversely on health and well being.
- Increased travel time for pupils and exposure to congestion on route has an adverse impact on child welfare.
- The emphasis on cars and vehicles outside of the school and minimal bike racks suggests that the Council is not promoting active travel to the school or that this lies at the heart of the design process.
- The transport assessment indicates that the majority of pupils attending Pont Sion Norton are expected to arrive by car – reflecting how few public transport options there are to serve the communities who make use of Pont Sion Norton. This will inevitably lead to increased use of the private car and associated congestion and air pollution. The transport assessment also makes

assumptions about the routes parents will take and this is by no means definitive.

- The transport assessment mentions setting targets but is not clear on how a reduction would actually be delivered. The methods referenced are used currently and are unsuccessful in promoting sustainable travel
- The Transport Assessment collected speed surveys on Holly Street were collected on the last week of the summer term and not on a cold wet day when more children would arrive or leave on private transport.
- Residents were previously advised that there would be no parent drop off points within the school and this is contradicted in the Transport Assessment – clarification is required.
- Was the potential for conflict between cars and children around the access fully considered?
- The proposals include six bus drop off points no mention is made in the plans or the design and access statements of parental drop off points which is again contradicted by the Transport Assessment.
- The transport Assessment is factually incorrect and its findings are therefore inaccurate and misleading.
- The relative percentages of pupils from Pont Sion Norton and Heol Y Celyn used in the Transport Assessment are wrong they quote 59% from Heol Y Celyn and 41% from Pont Sion Norton when in the consultation document they are 27% from the former and 73% from the latter.
- The Transport Assessment suggests that planned school is not large enough as it uses incorrect figures and the movement of children from the English section to Hawthorn has not been taken into consideration.
- The mode split of primary pupils travelling to school is out of date, English not Welsh and does not take into account children bussed to school. More recent and relevant data needs to be used for this assessment; the planning application should therefore be withdrawn and resubmitted with an assessment based on more relevant data.
- RCT have said that they expect the majority of children to travel to school from the Pont Sion Norton catchment by bus – this has not been factored into the Transport Assessment at all. The planning application should be withdrawn until a more accurate assessment has been conducted.
- There are errors and inaccuracies throughout the Transport Assessment and the planning application should be withdrawn until it is re-done and the application considered in light of accurate information
- The Transport Assessment indicates construction traffic could access via Lime Street and at the same time suggests that it could also serve as access for education at the premises at the same time. This is unacceptable and clarification is required.
- No consideration is given to numbers at Cardinal Newman which have grown in recent years and will continue to do so and the impact this has on the highway network
- Reference is made in the supporting documentation to the A470 becoming a toll road plans for Heol Y Celyn cannot be progressed until this matter is resolved as the consequences for the local road network would be overwhelming.

- Proposals relating to pupils cycling to school are unrealistic given the nature of the roads involved particularly from a safety perspective.
- The traffic survey fails to mention flows on to Plane Street, Lime Street and Oak Street which locals use frequently to navigate the village the impact traffic will have on these streets is unknown.

*Following re-consultation the following points have been made*

- The predicted travel plans of site users are based on very low quality data/information and parents from Pont Sion Norton and Taffs Well do not appear to have been included. Similarly, some pupils who live outside the catchment area but will live inside the new catchment appear to not have been factored in There are questionnaires included which show that RCT will need to survey parents to look at how children will travel to school yet this is not seen as something that is relevant at this stage. How can RCT write a transport assessment with no accurate data?
- There is no information on which route busses will use to access the school. RCT argued at judicial review and appeal stated that the journey for YGGPSN pupils would be shorter than the current journey to school but there is no actual proposed route. The route should be specified (including the direction through Holly Street) as part of the planning process. RCT need to be transparent in the planning process.
- Though the drop off spaces are welcome, four is too few and will make no difference to parents parking along local streets to allow them to walk their children to class. Parents of young children will not be content to stop and drop and will continue to park near the site. There are no parking spaces on Holly Street as they are needed for traffic to pass.
- Given pedestrian access from Holly Street and any additional car parking along the street it is important to understand the direction of the extra 6 coaches travelling along the street to and from the school at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Previous plans only discussed five school buses and now a sixth from Taffs Well has been introduced. The introduction of a sixth bus has not been subject to any consultation at any time as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools proposals process.
- The claim that bus provision for 350 pupils represents an improvement in sustainable travel reducing the number of pupils travelling to school by car is factually incorrect. As parents at Pont Sion Norton or the Taffs Well area have not been surveyed their intentions in terms of using car or bus are unknown. The current arrangement only involves the use of three busses. The number of children who need to travel by bus who may otherwise have been walked to the local school in their local community is increasing by three, resulting in a net increase in bus travel over active travel. In respect of the current situation at Heol Y Celyn there are no busses servicing the school.
- Similarly, the busses are for children who would not have been attending school in the catchment are previously so it is inaccurate to state that it represents “a significant positive travel mode shift”. The report should be re-written with all such illogical comments removed. RCT’s plans mean that there are more

children having to travel further to school. This is a huge negative environmental impact of these plans.

- Regarding the framework travel plan, how does adding six buses twice a day reduce the developments impact of local air quality and traffic noise, reduce the impact of traffic on the local environment and deliver local environmental improvements for reduced congestion, pollution and noise. Children, whose parents choose to transport them from Pont Sion Norton, will be doing so for their own reasons and the framework travel plan to them is worthless. Local schools within local communities is the only way to reduce the impact of travel, improve local air quality and reduce travel noise.
- The plan to have a Travel Plan Co-ordinator in place six months before the opening of the school is too little too late. What actions will be taken by the TPC if found that site users travelling to the site are adversely impacting the parking situation and what would be the point of any survey of travel plans at this point? These issues need to be addressed now and inform the travel assessment. This is passing the buck to appease rather than writing a travel assessment based on facts.
- What actions will be taken by the Travel Plan Coordinator if site users travelling to the site are adversely impacting the parking situation? This is important in relation to Plane Street where surveying has revealed above 100% capacity of cars parking at certain times of the day
- Regarding public transport has it been determined that there are enough services running for parents at Glyncoch, Coed Y Cwm Ynysybwl, Pont Sion Norton and Cilfynydd to access the site outside of core school hours for various reasons (after school clubs, parents evenings etc.) to enable them to participate fully in the community life of the school. If these services are not in place would it be necessary to negotiate the provision of such services with local bus companies
- The point at which a baseline travel survey is required is at the time that the initial proposition to develop a new school is made as per the opening statement of the BREEAM travel plan yet according to the schedule and as stated in the revised transport assessment local residents will not actually be aware of the traffic impacts that this new school development will have until some point as yet to be determined after the new school has opened. This reiterates the need for parents to be surveyed now to provide a baseline for data for trip calculations. A proper traffic assessment needs to form part of the survey and assessment that should be undertaken as part of the statutory planning application and the planning application should be re-submitted following a proper survey as to travel intentions so that the possible effect of increase car traffic can be properly assessed on local roads
- The sample survey documents state that the survey is being undertaken to support the planning application for the proposals that seems to indicate that the author of the report was considering that such a survey should be issued at this stage and not after the school has opened. (the content of the survey document is also criticised).
- The revised transport assessment incorrectly describes the catchment area being the same as current Heol Y Celyn school when the majority of pupils will be from Pont Sion Norton and now pupils from Taffs Well are being factored in.
- The 2024 parent travel scenario has significantly altered and has been recalculated but does not appear to be based on fact. Now that breakfast clubs



and after school clubs have actually been mentioned shouldn't there be a fact gathering exercise to determine how many people would be travelling by car to the school and parking in residential areas.

- Given the route for the busses has not been factored in, it is also unclear whether the extra journeys by pupils from the Taffs Well area have been factored in either. Further on this point no calculation has been presented as to the effect of this additional traffic on the local area including the 15% tolerance for children being brought to the school from that source by car and there would still be an issue with excess cars coming into the site even with the proposed drop off facility.
- In respect of diverted trips have the calculations been made including all the additional children and vehicles used to transport them from Taffs Well? If not this section needs to be re-written.
- Recent parking surveys reveal that Plane Street in Particular is above capacity. However, the report makes no recommendations on further measures that could be taken to reduce parking stress on Plane Street, e.g. parking restrictions.
- 2022 walking and cycling audit – route 3 the width restrictor is no longer in place as it is not Disability Discrimination Act compliant and this reduces the safety of the walking route which has in the past been used by off road bikes. A solution needs to be found and put in place that prevents its use by off road bikes and at the same time is DDA compliant. Proposals to remove graffiti and introduce dropped kerbs and tactile paving are welcomed.
- Assessments have been done during Covid when many pupils were not in school people were working from home and able to walk to school.
- The proposals appear to be inconsistent with the Welsh Government's transport strategy that emphasises the need for access to local services on people's doorsteps. This element of the strategy is not referred to in the planning statement.
- A score of 2.92 is given for the accessibility index at no point is it explained what this means.
- The cost of providing bus transport to RCTBC is likely to increase with the removal of cross subsidisation and increasing fuel costs.
- The claims made in respect of catchment area are challenged as the catchment area for the school will change once the new school opens and any children living in the current catchment but outside of the 1.5 mile area would qualify for free school transport (contrary to paragraph 3.2.4.)
- The original Transport Assessment was criticised as data was only collected in the last week before the end of the summer term rather than in a winter week or month. This data may therefore not be accurate and proposals should be resubmitted when a more accurate is available – this information has not been updated.

## **Drainage & Water Management**

- There are concerns in the area over flooding and Holly Street flooded as recently as 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021 causing damage, disruption and pollution to the area including to the School, it is therefore concerning that the Design & Access Statement takes the view that given the classification of Zone A of the site under

TAN 15 Development & Flood Risk, no further flooding consideration is required.

- Given the recent flooding incident lead to flood water on site has the drainage strategy been altered to take account of this and should barriers/bunds be included along the boundary to reduce this possibility in future
- The Geotechnical and Geonvironmental Report only monitored ground water levels in June and July and during periods of heavy rainfall ground water has been recorded as shallow as 1.2mbgl, surely it would have been good practice to have monitored groundwater conditions at different times of the year – is it good enough to only have monitored ground water conditions in the summer?
- Welsh Water have expressed concern about a lack of water supply to the development raising objections suggesting a hydraulic modelling assessment be carried out. Whilst the designers suggest that this is unnecessary what makes the designers more experienced than the professionals at Welsh Water? What future impact will this have on the proposed school and more importantly the pupils? Is such an approach acceptable?

### **Other issues**

- The site has been chosen because the Council already own and its selection saves money or the need to seek alternative sites and not because it's a central location or it affords good transport links. The site is unsuitable to accommodate the proposed expansion.
- The increased traffic congestion will impact local residents at a time when the Welsh Government have declared a climate emergency.
- Moving Pont Sion Norton Pupils to Heol Y Celyn will have implications for how current parents work as a family.
- Closing small schools and creating super schools dilutes communities, removes walking options and lends itself to the wider community spread of Covid 19.
- What size will the classes be with the merger of the schools, and how will this be supported to aid the children's development and education.
- Parents have chosen Pont Sion Norton from their own experiences there as a local school with a community feel
- The breakup of Pont Sion Norton is regarded as a disaster and if Heol Y Celyn becomes the only option, some parents will reconsider their children's education.
- The current school is both English and Welsh medium and this needs to be corrected in the submitted documents.
- Children from the Pont Sion Norton catchment will spend longer periods of time on a bus between 50 minutes and 1 hour 40 minutes each day to the detriment of learning, health and wellbeing and also increasing their risk of exposure to Covid 19 and in turn their families – has this even been considered in the context of transport management?
- Other solutions to the demands of English and Welsh Medium education in Pontypridd have not been explored.
- Is it considered that the options consultation undertaken by RCT Education was relevant to the planning application process? The options consultation was in relation to the whole 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools process and did not take in the views

of local residents and can it be cited as fulfilling the requirements of a proper neighbour community consultation if these people were not consulted as part of that process and it is stated that they are to be consulted as part of the planning application process.

- No indication is given of internal finishes to be used in the development under consultation it was indicated that trees would be replaced on a two for one basis this is not mentioned in the design and access statement – is this to take place?
- It was mentioned at non statutory consultation that trees would be replaced on a two for one basis – this is not mentioned at any time in the Design and Access Statement – is this to take place and can it be done in accordance with the Welsh Government Clean Air Plan for Wales?

## **CONSULTATION**

Transportation Section – No objections subject to conditions.

Flood Risk Management – offer no objection or any recommendation for condition in relation to surface water flood risk for this application as they are satisfied that the developments surface water flood risk will be adequately managed by both the Building regulations and Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

Public Health & Protection – No objections subject to conditions

Countryside – having reviewed the submitted detail it is considered an appropriate ecological assessment. \Ecological issues appear resolvable with the inclusion of a condition requiring compliance with section 5 of the Ecological Assessment Report.

Public Rights of Way Officer – the application should recognise the presence of a legally protected public right of way which crosses the application site and the effect of the proposed development on it. If the development progresses it will be at risk of interfering with or obstructing unless the path is extinguished or diverted. A condition to address the issue is recommended.

Education – Fully support the proposals

Natural Resources Wales – No Objections subject to the inclusion of a condition requiring the submission and agreement of a Construction Environment Management Plan in any consent that might be granted.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – No objections subject to conditions.

Western Power Distribution – Any new connection or line diversion will require the further consent of Western Power Distribution.

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service – Advise that a comprehensive fire strategy should be provided which indicates the package of fire safety measures that are proposed to satisfy The Building regulations and should address any variations to current guidelines. The developer should also consider the need for the provision of adequate water supplies for fire fighting purposes and access for emergency fire fighting appliances

The Coal Authority – Raise no objection to the proposed development and advise that their standard advice to developers be included as an advisory within any decision notice issued.

South Wales Police – Raise no objection to the proposed development and advise in general terms on site security issues.

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust – As archaeological advisors to your Members, we have no objections to the positive determination of this application. The record is not definitive, however, and features may be disturbed during the course of work. In this event, please contact the trust.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan**

Members will be aware that the current LDP's lifespan was 2011 to 2021 and that it is in the process of being reviewed. The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced provisions specifying the period to which a plan has effect and providing that it shall cease to be the LDP at the end of the specified period. These provisions were commenced on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016 but do not have retrospective effect. Therefore, the provisions do not apply to LDPs adopted prior to this date and plans adopted before 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016 will remain the LPD for determining planning applications until replaced by a further LDP. This was clarified in guidance published by the Minister on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Subsequently, the existing Plan remains the development plan for consideration when determining this planning application.

The application site is located inside of the settlement boundary for Rhydyfelin but is not allocated for any specific purpose.

**Policy CS2** – sets out criteria for development in the Southern Strategy Area.

**Policy AW2** – supports development in sustainable locations that includes sites that are within the defined settlement boundaries, are accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes, have good access to key services and facilities, and would not unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses.

**Policy AW5** – sets out criteria for new development in relation to amenity and accessibility.

**Policy AW6** – requires development to involve a high standard of design and to make a positive contribution to placemaking, including landscaping.

**Policy AW8** – sets out the criteria for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

**Policy AW10** – does not permit proposals where they would cause or result in a risk of unacceptable harm to health and/or local amenity.

## **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Design and Placemaking

Nature Conservation

Access Circulation and Parking  
Shopfront Design  
Employment Skills

### **National Guidance**

In the determination of planning applications regard should also be given to the requirements of national planning policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where national planning policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (PPW) was issued on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 in conjunction with Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (FW2040). PPW incorporates the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act into town and country planning and sets out Welsh Government's (WG) policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of all planning applications. FW2040 sets out the National Development Framework for Wales (NDF), WGs current position on planning policy at regional and national level.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking set out in PPW; and is consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's sustainable development principles through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives of driving sustainable development and building healthier communities and better environments.

It is also considered the proposed development is compliant with the NDF, with the following policies being relevant to the development proposed: *(or not in the case of refusals)*

- Policy 1 – Where Wales will grow – Employment/Housing/Infrastructure
- Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth – Sustainability/Placemaking
- Policy 3 – Supporting Urban Growth – Council land/Placemaking/developers/regeneration/sustainable communities'/exemplar developments.
  
- Policy 33 – National Growth Areas Cardiff Newport & the Valleys – SDP/LDP/large schemes.

Other relevant policy guidance consulted:

PPW Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation & Planning  
PPW Technical Advice Note 11: Noise  
PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 16: Sport Recreation and Open Space;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport;  
PPW Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development  
Manual for Streets

### **REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

## **Main Issues:**

### **Principle of the proposed development**

The application seeks the redevelopment of the existing school facility at the site, replacing the existing buildings, associated play and recreation facilities and infrastructure with a new, modern facility that complies with Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools brief.

The proposed development would be sited within the grounds of an existing primary school where the principle for this type of use has been long established. Further, the scheme is supported by the Council's Education and Inclusion Services Section who welcome the development.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable, in principle and compliant with policies CS2 and AW2 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

### **Impact on the character and appearance of the area**

The redevelopment of the school would inevitably redefine built development on the existing site. However, with regard to the character and appearance of the area the impacts of the proposed school, despite it being a two storey structure replacing single storey structure, are considered acceptable. The proposed school would be built on the western part of the plateau area at the base of an embankment that sits approximately three to five metres lower than properties on Holly Street and Lime Street. The new school is a modern building which replaces a series of smaller buildings and in this sense would add to the character and appearance of the area by providing it with a more coherent appearance providing clearer definition and a better focal point within the community. The scale and design of the proposed school by its very nature is greater than the buildings round about however, any school would be and should be as a school offers a focal point for the locality and the people who live there lending character to the area. The improved design offers a positive improvement to the appearance of the area, particularly in comparison to the existing school building, as a tired and somewhat dilapidated facility will be replaced with a modern purpose built facility that displays a coherent appearance in its layout, general arrangement and the finish material proposed. As such, the proposals are considered compliant with the requirements of Local Development Plan Policies AW5 and AW6 insofar as they relate to this issue.

### **Impact on residential and visual amenity**

As mentioned above, the redevelopment of this site will result in alterations to its character and appearance, however these changes have the potential to improve visual and residential amenity.

The redevelopment of the site will result in the existing arrangement being substantively altered where the existing school located in the eastern part of the plateau will be relocated west towards Lime Street on to the existing playing field and the proposed layout taking a more conventional form. The remainder of the site will be given over to the associated play and recreational facilities. The result is that the school will be placed at the base of an embankment where its impact on most of the properties round about would be minimised by the local topography. The greatest impact is likely to be to Cwrt Y Gamlas south west of the site boundary as it sits at a lower level than the school site though in this case there is sufficient distance between the built elements of the school and those properties to demonstrate that any impact on residential amenity would be acceptable.

The building and grounds are an established school site and the new building is set out in such a way that there would be no substantive impact on the privacy of residents round about.

The existing buildings are of a single-storey nature and of a design typical of many 1960/70s education establishments throughout the County Borough, whereas the new structure would be two storey but be of a modern design incorporating better quality contemporary external materials that presents a stark contrast to the existing arrangement. This would represent a considerable uplift in the appearance and quality of public buildings consistent with other recent developments in the Rhydyfelin area.

In any event, the design of the existing buildings appears somewhat dated and in need of modernising. It is considered its replacement with a new building using modern materials and construction methods will be far more aesthetically pleasing. The new building would form an attractive and high-quality development that will significantly enhance the visual amenities of the site and surrounding area that more readily aligns with existing established development within the community. Additionally, appropriate landscaping will be located throughout the site helping to soften the development and ensure it sits well within the context of the more open areas round about the site.

It must also be kept in mind that the siting location and scale of the new building has to some extent been driven by the site's own constraints. The existing school needs to continue to function whilst the new build takes place and therefore, the suggested location for the new building is probably the only viable one, particularly so in this case given the topography of the site and other development close by.

In terms of visual impact, an institutional building of the size proposed would present a visible and prominent development in the wider locality. However, it would remain a school within established school grounds so wider context would remain, and as mentioned above the location at the base of the embankment minimises its visual impact to a large extent. The positives in this design represent an improvement over the existing dated appearance of the existing school.

With respect to noise and disturbance, given the very nature of a school and its associated outdoor spaces, it is inevitable that surrounding residents would experience a degree of impact. The new school would accommodate an increase in pupil's 388 to 480. Consequently, there will be an intensification of use of the site that could result in further noise/disturbance than existing. However, with no change of use at the site it is not considered the nature of any impact experienced by neighbours would be readily noticeable. Furthermore, the site has been occupied as a primary school for a considerable period and therefore surrounding residents would have become accustomed to the general noise/disturbance associated with such a use; and this existing impact would continue to occur even if the proposed development were not implemented. It is also noted that following assessment, the Public Health and Protection team have no concerns. At present, there is no intention that the school and its associated facilities would be used for community related uses outside of school hours, at the weekend or during school holidays. In light of the above, the proposals are considered compliant with Local Development Plan Policies AW5 and AW6 insofar as they relate to residential and visual amenity requirements.

### **Ecology**

Under consultation, the Council's Ecologist has confirmed that the ecological impact assessment submitted in support of the planning application represents an appropriate assessment of the situation as matters currently stand and that the mitigation and enhancement measures that it recommends are acceptable. As such, no objections are raised though it is recommended a condition be added to any consent requiring the measures set out in the report be implemented on site throughout and after development. Natural Resources Wales also raise no concerns with regard to this issue. As such, the proposals are considered compliant with the requirements of Local Development Plan Policy AW8 with regard to this issue.

### **Historic Mining Activity**

As the site lies within a low coal risk area The Coal Authority advise that the inclusion of advisory notes on any consent that might be issued would prove sufficient in this instance.

### **Drainage and Flood Risk**

Notwithstanding the concerns expressed by residents, the Council's Flood Risk Management team raised no objection to the proposal noting that a suitable drainage scheme could be implemented on site that will ensure there is no detriment to the surrounding area; and that this would be covered by the separate, necessary Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) application prior to any development commencing on site. Similarly, no concerns have been raised in respect of ground water levels or how they have been measured.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water raised no objection to the scheme noting that foul water flows can be accommodated in the public sewerage system and that the proposal to discharge surface water via SuDS is acceptable. For clarification, in respect of water supply Dwr Cymru Welsh Water commented as follows, *"a water supply can be made available to serve the proposed development. The developer may be required to*



*contribute under Sections 40-41 of the Water Industry Act 1991 towards the provision of new off-site and/or on site water mains and associated infrastructure...Our response is based on the information provided by your application. Should the proposals alter during the course of the application process we kindly request that we are re-consulted and reserve the right to make new representations.”* It appears therefore that concerns over water supply have been overcome.

## **Access and highway safety**

It is clear that the greatest weight of objection to the proposed development relate to access and highway safety issues and as such the response of Highways Development Control to the application is repeated in full below with further commentary where appropriate.

### Access

The application site is bound by Holly Street to the north, Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath PON/111/3 to the east, the rear of residential properties fronting Sycamore Street to the south, and Lime Street to the west.

The single point of access to the site for vehicles is via Holly Street, on the site's north-eastern edge. The site access is a simple priority T-junction, which is approximately four metres wide. Either side of the junction on Holly Street there are 'School Keep Clear' road markings and yellow zigzag lines. There is also a zebra crossing to the east of the access.

There are currently no on-site drop-off facilities, and as a result, parents tend to drop off / pick-up their children from Holly Street and other neighbouring streets.

Holly Street is a single carriageway road subject to a 20-mph speed limit and is approximately 6.3 metres wide within the vicinity of the site. Holly Street runs from Dyffryn Road to the east and continues as Dynea Road to the west.

Holly Street benefits from speed cushions separated by 70 – 80 metre intervals starting near the junction with Lime Street and continuing onto Dynea Road up to the junction with Pinewood Avenue, thus creating a traffic calmed environment.

Dynea Road is subject to a 20-mph speed limit between Holly Street and the junction with Pinewood Avenue, the speed limit then increases to 30-mph. Dynea Road connects Holly Street to Cardiff Road (A4054) at a simple priority T-junction, approximately 1.2 kilometres southeast of the site. Dynea Road provides a link to Gelli-Hirion Industrial Estate, north of the A470.

Holly Street meets Dyffryn Road at a simple priority T-junction. Dyffryn Road is a single carriageway road, approximately six metres wide, and subject to a 20-mph speed limit. To the south of the junction with Holly Street, Dyffryn Road leads to a range of local amenities, before meeting the A4054 Cardiff Road / College Way at a simple priority T-junction.

### Internal Access Road

Vehicular access to the site would remain in the same location, off Holly Street, however the access junction (and internal access road) would be improved. It is proposed to widen the access to 14.5 metres at the junction with Holly Street. The applicant will be required to liaise with the council's traffic section with regards any amendments to the existing TRO for the Zebra Crossing and School Keep Clear lines in the vicinity of the access to be improved / widened.

The internal access road would be 6.5 metres wide. The access road proposed is acceptable for safe two-way vehicular movement by the type of vehicle proposed school buses and standard cars. There would be six 70-seater coach spaces provided on site within the bus drop-off loop, five of these spaces would be for YGGPSN buses. The sixth space would be for potential future use to serve pupils living in the Taffs Well area (i.e., south of the proposed NWMS).

There would be four drop-off/collection bays for parents or guardians provided within the site on the west side of the staff car park. It is anticipated that the number of pick up and drop off bays proposed is sub-standard to cater for the volume of traffic generated by the proposed development by parents when the school reaches full capacity of 540 pupils. It is on this basis that the internal layout has not been approved and a condition requiring a new design with additional drop off facilities provided.

The proposed indicates the internal access road will be designed to adoptable standards. The tie in with Holly Street to the boundary of the school curtilage will be adopted only.

### Visibility.

The visibility splays at the site access of 2.4 metres x 33 metres to the west (i.e., eastbound); and 2.4 metres x 35 metres to the east (i.e., westbound) can be achieved. These splays accord with the Manual for Streets 2 desirable minimum visibility splay standards based on the recorded 85th percentile speeds on Holly Street 21.7mph Eastbound & 22.5Mph Westbound which is acceptable.

### Pedestrian Access

The proposed internal access would be provided with two metres wide footways on both sides which would be contiguous with the existing footways on Holly Street. The proposed 2.0m footways are acceptable and accord with current standards for safe pedestrian access. It is anticipated that the internal layout will be amended to provide required pick up and drop off which will be condition with potential for amendments to pedestrian access.

There is an existing pedestrian access to the site on Holly Street, approximately 100 metres west of the main site access. This access would be upgraded as part of the development. It is proposed to widen the existing ramp to 2.5 metres and fit new guard railings, the existing entrance to the ramp from Holly Street would also be resurfaced. The ramp would lead directly to the main building entrance. It would also be continuous with the footways within the site which is acceptable It is not anticipated that the ramp access would change to that indicated on the submitted site plan which is acceptable.

## Car Parking

Parking standards for are set out in RCTCBC's Delivering Design and Placemaking SPG document. The standards for Nursery/Infants/Primary Schools are as follows:

- Operational: One commercial vehicle space
- Non-operational: Two spaces per classroom
- Visitors: Three spaces

There are 45 car parking spaces proposed on site, split as 30 standard bays, 4 electric vehicle (EV) charging bays, three visitor bays, three disabled bays, 4 pickup & drop off Spaces, and one commercial vehicle bay. Taking the above into consideration the proposed accords with the Council's SPG Access, Circulation & Parking 2011 for staff and visitor parking for daily operation of the school.

There are 50 staff members. However, it is anticipated that a number of staff will be part time and from the local area reducing the full time equivalent.

## Pick Up Drop Off

RCTCBC's parking standards also state that new school developments require an area to be provided for the picking up and setting down of school children separate from the main pedestrian access/egress. The parking area should include a facility for vehicles to turn without reversing.

There would be four drop-off/collection bays for parents or guardians provided within the site on the west side of the staff car park. It is anticipated that the number of pick up and drop off bays proposed is sub-standard to cater for the volume of traffic generated by the proposed development by parents when the school reaches full capacity of 540 pupils. It is on this basis that the internal layout has not been approved and a condition requiring a new design with additional drop off facilities provided.

The proposal shall provide sufficient pick up and drop off facilities to reduce indiscriminate on-street car parking at pick up and drop off and mitigate the impact in close proximity to the school with regards the proposed expansion.

## Cycle Parking / Stands

Based on the RCTCBC's guidance, educational establishment cycle parking standards specific to nurseries and primary schools are as follows:

Short Stay: One stand per 100 children

Long Stay: One stand per five staff + one stands per 20 children

A total of 43 cycle parking spaces is proposed on site, ten spaces for staff, 27 spaces for pupils and six visitor spaces. 40 cycle parking spaces would be provided in a covered cycle store adjacent to the Main Hall. Visitor cycle parking spaces would be located in and around the main hall.

The proposed accords with RCT Access, Circulation & Parking 2011 and promotes sustainable modes of transport which is acceptable

### Service & Delivery

Refuse would be collected from within the site, by the Council's Waste Department. Refuse vehicles would use the site access, circulate around the internal access road, and exit the site in a forward gear.

The bin store is adjacent to the service vehicle turning area which is acceptable.

Delivery vehicles would also serve the site via the internal access road, and load/unload using the commercial vehicle parking space.

### Swept Path Analysis

The application has provided swept path analysis for service vehicles including the largest vehicle anticipated using the new access and turning facilities which is acceptable.

### Bus Access Point.

There is concern that no information has been submitted with regards potential access routes to the school by the proposed buses. There would be concern should the access be proposed via Holly Street / Dynea Road due to the high on-street car parking associated with the existing dwellings and adjacent school. Therefore, a condition has been suggested limiting the means of access for buses servicing the school to approach / depart via Holly Street, Dyffryn Road and the A4054 for the most direct route with limited impact on the existing public highway.

### Transport Statement Vol 2 (With Home to School Transport).

There are currently 322 total pupils at Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School (including the nursery class). At present, there is no provision for pupil drop-off within the site and therefore parents/guardians who drop their child park their cars on residential streets within the vicinity of the school (such as Holly Street). It is noted that the majority of pupils attending the existing school live within the catchment area with potential to walk to school.

There would be 314 pupils (including the nursery) projected to attend the NWMS when it is first occupied in September 2024.

Out of the 314 total pupils, projections indicate that 70% i.e., 220 pupils would be from YGGPSN and the remaining 30% i.e., 94 pupils would be from Heol-Y-Celyn. These figures are based on the current Welsh medium data held for the school.

The proposed NWMS would have potential for a total capacity for 540 pupils (including the nursery). Therefore, for a robust analysis the proposed transport assessment has been undertaken on full capacity 540 pupils.

Based on current data and pupil numbers, if the school was to be at full capacity, then out of the 540 total pupils, 60% i.e., 324 pupils would be from YGGPSN and the remaining 40% i.e., 216 pupils would be from Heol-Y-Celyn.

It is noted that no staff numbers have been added to the trip generation. However, taking into account staff trips will be outside the peak trips of pickup and drop off by parents and there is in excess of the off-street car parking provision required within the site for staff of the school with no detrimental impact on the existing highway network the proposed is acceptable.

#### Breakfast Club / After School.

The existing schools offer Breakfast Clubs and After School Clubs with pupils arriving between 8:00-8:30am and leaving in the PM outside the peak hours of 15:00-15:30pm.

Based on current data and pupil numbers, if the school was to be at full capacity, then out of the 540 total pupils, 60% i.e., 324 pupils would be from YGGPSN and the remaining 40% i.e., 216 pupils would be from Heol-Y-Celyn.

Breakfast club pupils would arrive between 08:10 and 08:30 (i.e., before the school AM drop-off peak) and could therefore use the proposed internal drop-off spaces. The proposed school would be open to remaining pupils (not attending breakfast club) at 08:50, with the school day starting at 09:00.

From the information submitted there would be there would be a total of 33 breakfast club pupils arriving by car in the capacity scenario (i.e., 23 YGGPSN and ten Heol-Y-Celyn).

Therefore, by applying the 1.8 vehicle occupancy (AM), the 33 breakfast club pupils would arrive in 18 vehicles between 08:10 and 08:30 hours and would use the proposed drop-off bays, as well as the bus turning circle within the site with no impact on the surrounding highway network.

#### MWMS Peak AM Trips

As mentioned previously, the school will be open to pupils at 08:50 and the school day starts at 09:00 (with the exception of those attending breakfast club). Therefore, the NWMS AM peak would be between 08:30 and 09:00 as the majority of pupils would arrive during this period.

All pupils that live within the current YGGPSN catchment area would be eligible for free home to school transport and would be transported within the proposed five buses planned for pupils attending the NWMS. However, in order to portray a more accurate estimate of transport users, we will apply a 15% tolerance, so even though 301 pupils are able to utilise home to school transport, for the purpose of this exercise, we will assume 45 of these pupils will arrive by car.

This is considered to be robust as the proposal would provide five 70-seater coaches for the YGGPSN catchment, and therefore space would be provided for all eligible pupils.

### Heol Y Celyn Pupils ( pupils within 1.5 miles).

216 total Heol-Y-Celyn pupils minus 35 Heol-Y-Celyn breakfast club pupils = 181 Heol-Y-Celyn pupils arriving during the NWMS AM peak (i.e., 08:30 – 09:00).

As per this methodology, 86% of the 181 Heol-Y-Celyn pupils (i.e., 156 pupils) arriving during the NWMS AM peak would live within 1.5-miles of the school. Of these 156 pupils, 28 pupils (i.e., 18%) would travel by car. The remaining 25 Heol-Y-Celyn pupils living outside of the 1.5-mile catchment also travel by car.

Therefore, of the 181 Heol-Y-Celyn pupils travelling during the NWMS AM peak in the capacity scenario, 53 pupils would travel by car.

### MWMS Total Combined New School Peak Trips

There would be 482 pupils out of 540 total pupils travelling to the NWMS during the AM peak (08:30 – 09:00) in the capacity scenario (i.e., 301 YGGPSN and 181 Heol-Y-Celyn).

Of the 482 pupils, 256 pupils would be accommodated on the five proposed 70- seater buses. Of the remaining 226 pupils, 128 would travel by active modes (i.e., walking or cycling) and 98 would travel by car.

By applying the 1.8 pupils per car vehicle occupancy (AM), the 98 pupils travelling to the NWMS by car would arrive in 54 vehicles.

Taking the above into consideration the Transport Assessment indicates there would be 54 vehicular trips by parents to the school in the AM peak 08:30-0900.

### MWMS PM PEAK

There would be 482 pupils out of 540 total pupils travelling from the NWMS during the PM peak (15:00 – 15:30) in the capacity scenario, the remaining pupils would depart school later after attending their after-school clubs.

Of the 482 pupils, 245 pupils would be accommodated on the five proposed 70- seater buses. Of the remaining 237 pupils, 137 would travel by active modes (i.e., walking or cycling) and 100 would travel by car.

By applying the 2.3 pupils per car vehicle occupancy (PM), the 100 pupils travelling from the NWMS by car would depart in 43 vehicles.

To summarise, the NWMS PM peak in the capacity scenario represents 43 vehicular collection trips (including the nursery).

### Peak Trip Rate AM-PM Summarised.

Time	In	Out	Two-Way
Breakfast Club (08:10 – 08:30)	18	18	36
AM School Peak (08:30 – 09:00)	54	54	108
PM School Peak (15:00 – 15:30)	43	43	86
After School Club (16:30 – 17:30)	18	18	36

### Parking Impact on Existing Network (Existing 2024)

Time	Existing Scenario		September 2024 Scenario		Net Change in cars parked on street
	No. of Inbound Trips (Table 3A)	No. of cars parked on street	No. of Inbound Trips (Table 4A)	No. of cars parked on street	
Breakfast Club (08:10 – 08:30)	8	8	11	0	-8
AM School Peak (08:30 – 09:00)	44	44	30	6	-38
PM School Peak (15:00 – 15:30)	37	37	23	0	-37
After School Club (16:30 – 17:30)	4	4	11	0	-4

### Parking Impact on Existing Network Full Capacity.

Time	Existing Scenario		Capacity Scenario		Net Change in cars parked on street
	No. of Inbound Trips (Table 3A)	No. of cars parked on street	No. of Inbound Trips (Table 5A)	No. of cars parked on street	
Breakfast Club (08:10 – 08:30)	8	8	18	3	-5
AM School Peak (08:30 – 09:00)	44	44	54	30	-14
PM School Peak (15:00 – 15:30)	37	37	43	19	-18
After School Club (16:30 – 17:30)	4	4	18	0	-4

Both tables above indicate a reduction in the overall impact of parental pickup and drop off on the existing highway network. However, the results are heavily reliant on the proposed pick up and drop off spaces being used to capacity with parents only setting down for 5 minute intervals and being available at all times which is not practical.

Therefore, to mitigate the impact of the proposal on the existing highway network a condition requiring re-design of the internal layout to provide additional pick up and drop off facilities for parents has been suggested.

### Parking Survey.

A parking survey was conducted within the vicinity of the site 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to cover both the peak AM and PM times. At the time of the surveys Wales was under Covid lock down restrictions which would have potentially resulted in additional on-street car parking with residents working from home.

A number of Streets in the vicinity were surveyed. The survey results indicated that the two nearest streets Beechwood & Holly Street fronting the site would have spare capacity to accommodate the 30 on-street spaces in the AM peak and 19 spaces PM required. However, this again relies on the internal drop off facilities working to full capacity and therefore the condition suggested to increase pickup and drop off facilities within the site has been suggested.

The TA has demonstrated that there will be no detrimental impact to that of the existing situation. However, by providing additional spaces within the site the proposed will result in a betterment at full capacity which is acceptable.

### Travel Plan.

The Council require a Travel Plan to be prepared for all educational establishments due to them being significant trip generators. New and expanded school facilities should be accompanied by a School Travel Plan which promotes safe cycle and walking routes, restricts parking and car access at and around schools, and includes on site changing and cycle storage facilities.

The applicant has submitted a Travel Plan with a number of proposals to reduce single occupancy car trips and promote sustainable modes of transport such as bus, rail walking and cycling.

The objectives of this FTP.

- To encourage staff, parents, pupils, and visitors to use more sustainable modes.
- of transport to travel to and from the site;
- To improve awareness of transport issues and reduce the impact of traffic on the local environment;
- To minimise the proportion of single occupancy car trips made by staff, parents, and visitors to and from the site;
- To develop a change in travel behaviour of individuals towards sustainable modes of travel and then maintain that change.

The benefits of the FTP are therefore:

- Improving site access and travel choice for staff, parents, pupils and visitors;
- Ensuring adequate provision for site users with disabilities;
- Delivering local environmental improvements for reduced congestion, pollution, and noise; and
- Providing opportunities for active and healthy travel.

The TPC will be responsible for:

- Acting as the point of contact for the travel plan;
- Marketing and promoting the travel plan;
- Providing sustainable travel information to the school community;
- Monitoring and reviewing the travel plan;
- Liaison with RCT, transport operators and specialist groups; and



- Arranging travel surveys of the school community to be undertaken.

The proposed TP measures are laid out in an action plan with timescales and responsibilities.

	Description	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Ensure that facilities to promote walking and cycling including secure cycle parking and pedestrian/cycle routes are constructed as per the approved plans.	Developer	Construction phase
2	Developer will hand over a copy of the TP to the management company.	Developer	Prior to occupation
3	Management company takes ownership of the TP and appoints a TPC.	Management company	Prior to occupation
4	ADL to be the initial point of contact for the newly appointed TPC. ADL will also provide TPC with RCTCBC's TP Officer and provide RCTCBC with the TPC's contact details.	ADL	During TP handover
5	Ensure travel information is available to staff, parents, pupils, and visitors.	TPC	On-going
6	Make an initial point of contact with RCTCBC.	TPC	Within 1 month of appointment
7	Ensure on-site facilities to promote walking and cycling including secure cycle parking and pedestrian/cycle routes are appropriately maintained.	TPC	On-going
8	Make parents/staff aware and encourage them to use the carshare database <a href="https://liftshare.com/uk">https://liftshare.com/uk</a>	TPC	On-going
9	Undertake 1 <sup>st</sup> travel survey.	TPC	Within 6 months of first occupation
10	Submit the results to RCTCBC.	TPC	Within 1 month of survey
11	Analyse the results and set targets in liaison with RCTCBC.	TPC	Within 2 months of survey
12	Revise the TP and submit revised TP to RCTCBC for approval.	TPC	Within 3 months of survey
13	Repeat steps 9 – 12.	TPC	Year 3 and year 5
14	Be a point of contact for all site users with regards to travel matters.	TPC	On-going
15	If the targets are not met, liaise with RCTCBC to put forward remedial measures.	TPC	Year 1, 3 and 5
16	Further review to be undertaken within 6 months of implementing the remedial measures.	TPC	6 months after the remedial measures are implemented

The details submitted are acceptable and set out the aims and objectives of the Travel Plan to reduce single occupancy trips and promote sustainable modes of transport reducing the impact on the existing highway network surrounding the site.

### Safe Routes Assessment.

ADL have undertaken a Safe Routes to School Assessment of the main walking and cycling routes from the residential areas in the vicinity of the proposed development. The selected routes have been assessed based on the existing pedestrian infrastructure such as footway width, street lighting, and the provision of crossing points at key junctions.

A Safe Routes to School Assessment of the relevant walking and cycling routes within a one-mile catchment of the existing Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. Pedestrian desire lines for parents/pupils of the proposed NWMS were determined based on the existing postcode data, obtained from RCTCBC, of Heol-Y-Celyn and YGGPSN pupils.

Pedestrian desire lines were divided into six key walking routes. ADL audited each route based on crossing infrastructure at junctions (i.e., presence of dropped kerbs + tactile paving), crossing availability on busy roads (where deemed appropriate), footway condition (i.e., even/uneven), and footway width.

The pedestrian infrastructure on Holly Street (W) and Dyffryn Road is in a suitable condition. There is a pelican crossing point across Dyffryn Road and dropped kerbs and tactile paving across all junctions from College Way to the site access. There is also a zebra crossing at the site access to allow pedestrians to cross Holly Street.

Holly Street (E) also benefits from dropped kerbs and tactile paving across all junctions from Pinewood Avenue to the site access.

The PRow network to the north of the school (i.e., Wordsworth Gardens and NCN Route 4) benefits from a suitable provision of step-free access and street lighting and is therefore considered conducive to encouraging active modes of travel.

PRow footpaths connecting the site to Oak Street, Sycamore Street and Hawthorn Crescent are appropriately maintained by trimming overgrown hedges/trees, removing graffiti if present, and ensuring that there is a sufficient level of street lighting to encourage pupils/parents to walk to/from the site during winter months.

To improve the permeability of the site to surrounding residential areas, ADL recommends the provision of a crossing point across Masefield Way adjacent to the bus stop. The off-site highway works to provide additional crossing point recommended can be conditioned accordingly.

The proposed walking / cycling routes to and from the school within the catchment area have been assessed as good with the exception of some general maintenance and additional crossing point on Mansfield Way which is acceptable.

### Construction Method Statement

The submitted construction method statement indicates use of the lower section of Lime Street (Single Width Carriageway) which is not acceptable. Improvements will be required to the access off Holly Street to the proposed site by removal of the no left turn / no right turn and on this basis the submitted Construction Method Statement is not acceptable and therefore a condition has been suggested accordingly. The proposed will require a temporary traffic regulation order to revoke the turning restrictions with potential for an 8-week process. Therefore, the applicant would be advised to contact traffic services at the earliest opportunity.

### Other matters

The detail above adequately addresses the substantive concerns raised by residents in respect of access and highway safety considerations however there a few issues that require further comment as follows: -

Whilst the Transport Assessment would not take into account the nature of local topography there is no evidence offered to suggest that it actually influences transport choice ahead of walking.

A number of objections referred to inconsiderate parking near the school this though is a traffic enforcement matter rather than something that could or should influence a decision on this planning application.

It has been suggested that increased traffic could adversely affect the mobility of residents of nearby sheltered housing complexes. Notwithstanding the findings of the Transport Assessment, no evidence is offered to support the claim.

Highways Development Control have indicated that there may be a requirement to vary current Traffic Regulation orders but have not indicated any need or intention to restrict resident parking on Holly Street.

Issues with bus transport to and from Cardinal Newman School should not influence the decision on this planning application.

Lime Street would not be used as a means of vehicular access to the new school.

Travel time and its impact on child welfare is a matter for the school and its management and not a matter for the planning process.

Whether or not the A470 would become a toll road is a matter for the Welsh Government as it is a trunk road. In any event, it cannot be used as an excuse to delay the determination of the planning application not least because it is so unlikely a proposition.

Some mention is made of a sixth bus now forming part of the submission and it not having been included under the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools consultation. The sixth bus is intended to cover the Taffs Well area which is part of the school catchment and space within the site is provided for in its operation.

Up to 350 pupils travelling by bus would represent an improvement in sustainable transport if they would otherwise be travelling by car in this regard comparison to the existing situation at YGGPSN is not appropriate. The argument in respect of air quality and noise is also answered in the same way.

The level of public transport provision that may or may not be available outside of core hours is not in any way a material planning consideration.

The lack of any reference to the Welsh Government's Transport Strategy in the Planning Statement is unimportant and not every service is capable of being delivered "on the doorstep".

Accessibility Index is a BREEAM terminology. BREEAM is a sustainability assessment method for Masterplanning projects. It is not a planning tool. Accessibility Index is a measure that provides an indicator of the accessibility and density of the public transport network at a point of interest.

Given the location of the site and type of proposal, the Accessibility Index of 2.92 is considered acceptable, because majority of the users of the development would be using school buses and not public transport.

Whether school transport is cross subsidised or not costs for transport will no doubt increase this though is not a material planning consideration.

Similarly changes in catchment areas and how that might affect numbers eligible for school transport is not a material planning consideration.

### **Public Health & Protection**

Public Health and Protection have no objection to the scheme but suggest several conditions be attached to any consent in relation to noise/dust/lighting levels. These matters are though more effectively controlled through other legislation and an advisory note would be attached to any consent issued should planning permission be granted. Notwithstanding this point, the position adopted by Public Health & Protection makes the proposals compliant with the policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

### **Planning & Procedural Issues**

When the planning application was first submitted there was some concern that not all documents were available to view after first advertisement. This was rectified by further advertisement when they were available to view.

It is commonplace for plans to be modified in the course of dealing with a planning application as various issues are reviewed or altered. There is though no obligation to update associated documents to reflect such changes.

It is a matter for Members if they choose to undertake a site visit before determining the application regardless of the recommendations of officers.

The objectors are correct in describing the existing use of the school as both English & Welsh medium. This is a minor error and has no bearing on the consideration of the planning application

The security and safety of the attenuation pond is a matter for the Education Authority should planning permission be granted.

The objectors reference the neighbour and community consultation exercise undertaken as part of the schools reorganisation process and question its relevance to the consideration of the planning application as it is referenced on the planning application form. The form should not have referenced this as whilst it was an appropriate exercise for an earlier consultation document, the planning process has its own consultation requirements. In this case, the proposals have been subject to a Pre Application Consultation and advertisement by means of press notices site notices and neighbour consultation letters and this meets all statutory requirements.

Question 12 of the planning application form relates to biodiversity and geological conservation and objectors question why the applicants have answered yes to (a) and no to (b & c). The applicants have in fact answered yes to (a) and (b) which relate to protected species and biodiversity features associated with the site. These issues have been addressed through the information supporting the planning application including the Environmental Aspects & Impact Risk Assessment, Tree Survey and Ecological Constraints & Opportunities Assessment. Section (c) of this part of the application form relates to features of geological conservation importance of which there are none and there is no need for any further work in respect of this.

### **Other issues**

Members will note that Public Health & Protection have suggested the inclusion of conditions relating to demolition works, noise, dust, the disposal of waste and lighting. These are issues that are more effectively addressed under other legislation and an advisory note would be attached to any planning permission that might be granted.

Similarly, the comments of the Public Rights of Way Officer are noted in respect of the footpath PON/111 this though is a matter that is covered by a separate body of legislation and as such, an advisory note is favoured ahead of an actual planning condition.

Natural Resources Wales indicated that they would support the proposals with a caveat that any permission be subject to a condition requiring the submission and agreement of a Construction Environmental management Plan. A Construction Environmental Management Plan that addresses the key issues raised by Natural Resources Wales accompanies the application and as such, compliance with that document is conditioned for.

Residents have made a number of observation and objections that are not necessarily addressed under the headings above and they are commented on as follows: -

The choice of site is a matter for the Education Authority and the purpose of the planning application is to assess that choice against the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act and its related legislation. The site is Central to Rhydyfelin, does afford good transport links for the potential end users of the site, and as outlined above the site is suitable for the change proposed.

Whilst Welsh Government have declared a climate emergency the claim that the development would increase congestion in any way is not substantiated with any supporting evidence.

Relocating the pupils from Pont Sion Norton to this site will no doubt have implications for parents and how they manage their families on a day to day basis, this though is a restructuring issue that the Education Department would have had due regard to in formulating their proposals for the greater Pontypridd area.

The claim that closing small schools dilutes communities removes walking options and lends itself to the wider community spread of Covid 19 is not supported with any substantive evidence. In any event, historically the catchments of Welsh Medium

Primary Schools have been much wider than those of their English Medium contemporaries and this would remain the case here.

Class sizes and how they are supported are a matter for school management and not the Local Planning Authority.

Parental choice and the reasons parents make the decisions that they make whether or not it relates to the closure of Pont Sion Norton, are a question of personal choice rather than anything to do with the relative merit of a planning application.

It is understood that the current arrangement is a mixed medium school this though has no bearing on the relative merit of the planning application.

The time spent travelling to and from school by pupils is a matter for the Education Department and school management bodies and is not a determining factor in the consideration of a planning application.

Whether or not other solutions to the demands of English and Welsh Medium Education have been explored is not a material planning consideration.

Consideration of internal finishes does not fall under the consideration of the Council as Local Planning Authority, it is purely a matter for the Education Authority.

Whether or not trees are replaced on a two for one basis is secondary to having an appropriate landscaping scheme in place, as is the case in this instance.

### **National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes**

Chapter 2 of PPW emphasises that development proposals should demonstrate sustainable placemaking to ensure that the right development is achieved in the right place, and states that development proposals should be assessed against the national sustainable placemaking outcomes to ensure this is the case.

PPW acknowledges that not every development proposal will be able to demonstrate that they can meet all of the outcomes, or that it can be proved that an attribute of a proposal will necessarily result in a particular outcome.

It is also recognised that the interpretation of the relevant criteria will depend upon the detail and context of the proposal and the application site, and in the planning balance, that greater material weight may be given to some attributes rather than others.

Therefore, in addition to consideration of the placemaking merits of the scheme within the sections of the report further above, a brief outline of how the proposed development is considered to align particularly well with the national sustainable placemaking outcomes is set out below:

- **Creating and Sustaining Communities:** The development would provide a state of the art primary school facility for pupils, and wider community uses for local residents long into the future.

- Growing Our Economy in a Sustainable Manner: The development would have a small but positive effect in terms of construction jobs and employment at the new facility.
- Making Best Use of Resources: The development accords with the aim to prioritise the use of previously developed land and sustainable building practices/materials. Future energy consumption would be from renewable sources resulting in a 'net zero carbon in operation' facility.
- Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact: The development would include suitable tree/landscape planting and biodiversity enhancement measures.
- Facilitating Accessible and Healthy Environments: The application site is in a highly sustainable location, directly adjacent to the centre of Rhydyfelin, with many transport links and services/facilities located within walking distance.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) however, the CIL rate for this type of development as The application is for development of a kind that is liable for a charge under set out in the Charging Schedule is £nil and therefore no CIL is payable.

### **Conclusion**

The application is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan in respect of the wider policy considerations set down in Planning Policy Wales<sup>11</sup> and Future Wales 2040. The proposals are also acceptable in terms of all other material planning considerations including all highway considerations subject to the application of appropriate conditions. The replacement school would represent a significant improvement over the existing facility in terms of what it is and what it can provide for the local community. The replacement school offers the opportunity to provide the area with a state of the art in operation facility that will provide local pupils with an improved learning experience.

### **RECOMMENDATION: Approve**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans Ref: -
  - Site Location Plan drawing no. NWMS-STL-XX-XX-Dr-A-01002-PL05
  - Existing Site Layout Plan drawing no. NWMS-SL-XX-XX-DR-A-01003-PL06.

- Proposed Site Strategy Plan drawing no. NWMS-STL-XX-OO-DR-A-01005-P43.
- Proposed Floor Plans drawing no. NWMS-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-10001-PL05.
- Proposed Roof Plans drawing no. NWMS-STL-XX-02-DR-A-01001-PL05.
- Proposed Building Elevations drawing no. NWMS-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-20001-PL06.
- Demolition Plans drawing no. NWMS-STL-XX-XX-DR-A-01004-PL05.
- Site Sections drawing no. NWMS-RVW-ZZ-ZZ-Dr-C-00100\_P2\_S0
- Site Levels Plan drawing no. C7014-RVW-ZZ-ZZ-SK-C-0001\_P1\_S0.
- Topographical Plan drawing no. 21243
- Existing Utilities Plan drawing no. 6980-MCP-V1-)))-DR-ME-9000-A0
- Proposed Utilities Plan drawing no. 6980-MCP-V1-XX-DR-ME-9001-A1
- Tree Constraints Plan drawing no. 21-082
- Highway Engineering Drawings NWMS-RVW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-00300\_P5\_S0
- Landscape Masterplan drawing no. 1958-URB-La-XX-XX-DR-101 Rev L
- Hard Landscape drawing no. 1958-URB-La-XX-XX-DR-102 Rev I
- Soft Landscape drawing no. NWMS-URB-XX-XX-DR-L-00101-P03 Landscape Masterplan
- Boundary Treatment drawing no. 1958-URB-LA-XX-XX-DR-104 Rev E
- Planting Plan drawing no. 1958-URB-LA-XX-XX-DR-201 Rev D(4 sheets).

and documents received by the Local Planning Authority unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations and mitigation/enhancement measures set out in: -

- Flood Consequences Assessment
- Site Investigation Report.
- Drainage Statement
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Tree Survey, Categorisation and Constraints Report.
- Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Method Statement.
- Construction Environmental Management Plan



Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority or otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

4. No development shall commence on site, other than demolition and enabling works, until full details of all external facing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved materials thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed development will be in keeping with the character of the area in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. No development shall commence on site, including any works of site clearance or demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to provide for, but not be limited to:

- i) The means of access into the site for all construction traffic.
- ii) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
- iii) The management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- iv) Loading and unloading of plant and materials.
- v) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
- vi) Wheel cleansing facilities.
- vii) The sheeting of lorries leaving the site.

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the development process unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and free flow of traffic in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. The submitted travel plan that sets out proposals and targets, together with a timescale to limit or reduce the number of single occupancy journeys to the site and to promote travel by sustainable modes of travel shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within six months of beneficial occupation. Annual reports demonstrating progress in promoting sustainable transport measures shall be submitted on each anniversary of the date of the planning consent to the Highway Authority.

Reason: to ensure the satisfactory provision of alternative travel modes to and from the site and use of sustainable travel.

7. The approved means of access for school buses servicing the school to approach/depart via Holly Street, Dyffryn Road and the A4054 for the most

direct route with limited impact on the existing public highway

Reason: in the interests of highway safety.

8. No HGV movements shall take place to and from the site between the hours of 7:45hrs – 09:30hrs and 15:00hrs – 16:00hrs weekdays during the course of site preparation and construction works.

Reason: in the interests of the safety and free flow of traffic in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

9. Notwithstanding the details shown on the submitted plans, design and details of the internal access, circulation and parking with the provision of additional pick up and drop off facilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to beneficial occupation of the new school.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety

10. Notwithstanding the details shown on the submitted plan designed details of the off-site highway works to provide additional pedestrian crossing facilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to the beneficial occupation of the new school.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

11. No surface water and/or land drainage shall be allowed to connect, directly or indirectly, with the public sewerage network.

Reason: to prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect health and safety of existing residents and ensure not pollution of or detriment to the environment.

12. The approved use shall not commence until an adequate grease trap has been fitted in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the grease trap shall be maintained to prevent grease entering the public Sewerage system.

Reason: to protect the integrity of the public sewerage systems and ensure the free flow of sewage.