



## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**25 FEBRUARY 2021**

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

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

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

**APPLICATION NO:** 20/1245/08 (CA)  
**APPLICANT:** Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC  
**DEVELOPMENT:** Detached extension block (to include four classrooms, school hall and associated external social spaces).  
**LOCATION:** FFYNNON TAF PRIMARY SCHOOL, CARDIFF ROAD, TAFFS WELL, CARDIFF, CF15 7PR  
**DATE REGISTERED:** 10/11/2020  
**ELECTORAL DIVISION:** Ffynon Taf

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#### **RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS**

**REASON:** The application is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan in respect of its impacts upon character and appearance, residential amenities and highway safety.

In addition, the proposal is considered to contribute to building strong and sustainable communities as it would provide modern and improved facilities at Ffynnon Taf Primary School.

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

The application is reported to the Planning and Development Committee for final determination as the application is submitted by the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council the Council's interest is of more than a minor nature.

#### **APPLICATION DETAILS**

This application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a detached extension block at Ffynnon Taf Primary School. The building would have maximum measurements of approximately 35 metres in length, 23 metres in width and 9.5 metres in height.

Internally the building would consist of a main hall, four classrooms and their associated cloakrooms and W.C.'s, as well as an ICT hub and storage spaces.

Externally, the building would be surrounded by playing areas to the north, south and west. The building's main entrance would be positioned on its southern side. It would be linked to the main school via a covered pathway.

External materials proposed include buff brick and render finish under a standing seam roof.

The new building would replace three demountable classroom units currently contained at the school.

The application is accompanied by the following:

- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Daytime Bat Survey
- Tree Survey
- Noise Survey
- Geo-Environmental and Geo-Technical Report

## **SITE APPRAISAL**

The application property is a primary school of Victorian construction, located towards the centre of the village of Taffs Well.

The school occupies a large site, within which there are three stone buildings as well as three demountable classrooms, all of which accommodate teaching facilities. An area of tarmac hardstanding provides space for a playground, with a larger playing field to the north.

The school is accessed from Cardiff Road to the east, with off street parking spaces to one side. To the north-east the tree-lined boundary is formed by the alignment of the Taff Vale Railway line, and to the west and north-west, the River Taff encloses the site. A number of residential properties and a public house are located to the south-west and south-east.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

|            |  |          |            |
|------------|--|----------|------------|
| 20/1245/10 | The construction of two temporary classroom blocks and yard.   | Approved | 13/02/2020 |
| 16/1142/08 | It is proposed to install a temporary double classroom demountable building onto the playing field adjacent to the playground. | Approved | 29/11/2016 |
| 11/1358/08 | Conversion and extension of a storage building to a classroom with 2 toilets and store room.                                   | Approved | 17/01/2012 |

## **PUBLICITY**

The application has been advertised by direct notification letter to neighbouring properties and two site notices were displayed.

No letters of objection or representation have been received.

## **CONSULTATION**

### Highways and Transportation:

No objections subject to a condition.

### Public Health and Protection:

No objections, conditions recommended.

### Drainage:

No objections and no conditions recommended.

### Ecology:

No objections, subject to conditions.

### Natural Resources Wales:

No objections.

### The Coal Authority:

No objections.

### South Wales Police:

No response received.

### South Wales Fire Service.

No response received.

### Taffs Well Community Council:

No response received.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan:

The Ffynnon Taf Primary School lies within the defined settlement boundary, with the exception of the school playing field which is outside the defined limits of development.

**Policy CS 2 – Development in the South:** Places an emphasis on sustainable growth.

**Policy AW 5 – New Development:** This policy sets out criteria for new development in relation to amenity and accessibility.

**Policy AW 6 – Design and Placemaking:** This policy requires development to involve a high quality design and to make a positive contribution to place making.

**Policy AW 8 – Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment:** This policy seeks to preserve Rhondda Cynon Taf's distinctive natural heritage.

**Policy AW 10 – Environmental Protection and Public Health:** Prohibits development proposals where they would cause or result in a risk of unacceptable harm to health and/or local amenity.

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 10 (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's (WG) current position on planning policy. The document incorporates the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act into town and country planning and sets out the WG's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of planning applications.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking set out in PPW; and is also 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.

Other policy guidance considered:

PPW Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 – Design

PPW TAN 15 – Development and Flood Risk

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Design and Placemaking

Nature Conservation

## **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.

The main issues in the determination of this application are:

**Principle of the proposed development:**

The existing permanent school buildings and yard area at Ffynnon Taf Primary School are positioned within settlement limits, however the school playing field lies outside of the settlement boundary.

The new building would be situated within the school playing field and so would be sited outside of the defined limits of development. Given that the proposal would be within the curtilage of the school grounds however, it is considered that the principle of the proposal is acceptable. In addition, it is noted that the site currently contains two mobile school buildings, one of which is positioned on the school field. It is therefore considered that the principle of permitting built form within the playing field which is associated with the primary school has previously been accepted. It is also considered that the proposal would significantly improve and modernise educational facilities at this site.

Based on the above, the principle of the proposal is deemed acceptable, subject to the considerations below.

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

Noting the scale of the proposal, compared to the size of the site as well taking into account the demolition of existing classrooms, the development would not result in overdevelopment or a significant intensification of the use of the site. The three demountable buildings which would be removed from the site as part of the scheme are of no architectural merit and it is considered their demolition would be of benefit to the overall character and appearance of the site.

The new building would be of modern design, with the aim for the building to be robust and functional. The use of coloured render has been chosen to create a colourful and interesting school for primary age children and the glazing is generous in order to maximise the quality of light and sense of space internally. Whilst it is noted that the remaining school buildings on site are of traditional design, the old and new buildings are considered to complement each other.

The new building would be visible from public vantage points, such as Cardiff Road, however it would be read in the context of the existing school and is considered acceptable in this regard.

As such, it is not considered that the proposals would form an overly prominent feature within the context of the school grounds or result in a detrimental impact upon the character of the immediate area. The application is therefore considered acceptable in this regard.

**Impact on amenity:**

Whilst the application site is located in an area where the majority of adjacent properties are residential in nature, the proposed building would be sited approximately 50 metres away from the nearest residential property. In addition, it would be partially screened by vegetation.

It is not considered that the addition of the building or associated external play areas would compromise the amenity or privacy of the surrounding residents or represent an unacceptable intensification of the existing use. Therefore, and in the absence of any neighbour representations or objections, the application is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

**Impact on highway safety:**

The application has been referred to the Council's Highways Department and no objections have been raised.

The means of access to the proposed development would remain as per the existing access arrangements to the school; this is considered acceptable. In terms of circulation, the submission includes a Swept Path Analysis that indicates that a fire tender vehicle is able to enter and exit the school site in a forward gear.

With regard to car parking, the proposed development maintains the existing level of off-street parking provision for staff, i.e. 23 spaces. The submitted Design and Access Statement also advises that the proposed development would not result in the employment of additional staff (the proposal is for enhanced educational facilities). As such, the proposal is not envisaged to increase existing off-street parking demand and gives no undue cause for concern.

The proposal also includes the formalisation of a parent drop off / visitor parking area alongside the southern boundary of the school site that would provide betterment over the existing situation.

Based on the above the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact upon highway safety. It is recommended that should permission be granted a condition be imposed ensuring the car parking spaces are laid out on site in permanent materials and retained for the purpose of vehicular parking only.

**Other Issues:**

Public Health and Protection: The Council's Public Health and Protection Department have been consulted on the proposal and they have raised no objections. Several conditions have however been recommended should planning permission be granted. The conditions relate to construction noise, dust and waste. Whilst these comments are acknowledged, it is considered that matters such as these can be more efficiently controlled by other legislation.

**Drainage:** It is noted that as the construction area of the development would be in excess of 100 square metres, the Applicant would be required to undertake separate SuDS approval which ensures that surface water at the site would be adequately managed. It is therefore not considered necessary to condition surface water drainage details as part of the planning permission. No objections have been received from the Council's Drainage Department, neither have any conditions been recommended. The Applicant proposes to dispose of foul drainage via the mains sewerage system. This would be subject to a separate agreement with Dwr Cymru.

**Ecology:** The application is accompanied by a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Daytime Bat Survey as well as a Tree Survey. The proposal has been reviewed by the Council's Ecologist as well as Natural Resources Wales.

Some concerns were initially been raised by NRW regarding the demolition of the small brick building. Following these concerns NRW have been advised that the Council's Ecologist has assessed this building and concluded that its bat potential is negligible. It is however considered necessary to adopt a precautionary approach and so a condition is recommended which would require a bat sensitive Demolition Method Statement to be submitted prior to demolition. Based on this, NRW have removed their objection.

In addition to the above, the Council's Ecologist has recommended that mitigation measures be put in place throughout the clearance of the existing school garden area as it has the potential to support reptiles. This is also considered acceptable.

It is also considered that the proposal provides the opportunity to provide ecological enhancement and so a condition is recommended requiring this to be undertaken through, for example, the incorporation of permanent bat roosting features and or nesting opportunities for birds.

In all other aspects, the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact upon the natural environment.

**Land Stability/Coal Mining Legacy:** The application is accompanied by a Geo-Environmental and Geo-Technical Investigation. Parts of the wider site are situated within the defined Development High Risk Area. In this instance, the report confirms that no undue risks are posed to ground stability from shallow coal mine workings, specifically the coal seams underlying the site are too deep to pose risk. This is further reinforced in that the area where built development is proposed is not within the defined Development High Risk Area. Consequently, no further investigations or remediation is proposed and no objections have been raised by The Coal Authority.

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

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

The application is for development of a kind that is not CIL liable under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

**Conclusion:**

It is considered the proposal would not have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the locality or upon the amenity of the surrounding residential properties. Furthermore, the proposal would not prejudice highway safety. The application is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION: Grant**

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 following approved plans:

- Location Plan;
- Proposed Site Plan;
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan;
- Proposed Roof Plan;
- Proposed Elevations;
- Proposed Demolitions Plan;
- Proposed Site Sections;
- Proposed Building Sections;
- Cycle Shelter, Bin Store and Sprinkler Housing Location;
- Proposed External Lighting Layout;
- Proposed Security, CCTV and Access Control Layout

all dated 05/11/2020 and documents received by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on 05/11/2020, 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 parking spaces indicated in the submitted Proposed Site Plan (Drawing No: V4 ZZ DR 05 1004 Rev P07, dated 05/11/2020) shall be laid out on site in permanent materials and be retained for the purpose of vehicular parking only.



Reason: To ensure vehicles are parked off the public highway, in the interests of highway safety and the free flow of traffic, in accordance with Policy AW 5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. Notwithstanding the submitted details, prior to above ground works, a scheme for biodiversity enhancement, such as incorporation of permanent bat roosting features and or nesting opportunities for birds shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The approved details thereafter shall be implemented, retained and maintained for the designed purpose in accordance with the approved scheme. The scheme shall include, but not be limited to, the following details:
  - a) Description, design or specification of the type of feature(s) or measure(s) to be undertaken.
  - b) Materials and construction to ensure long lifespan of the feature/measure.
  - c) A drawing(s) showing the location and where appropriate the elevation of the features or measures to be installed or undertaken.
  - d) When the features or measures will be installed and made available.

Reason: To provide biodiversity enhancement, in accordance with Chapter 6 of PPW.

5. The existing stone building as shown on the Proposed Demolition Plan (Drawing No: 05 1019 Rev P03, dated 05/11/2020) shall only be demolished following the submission of a Method Statement (which includes a pre-clearance check for bats) which shall be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To afford protection to animal species in accordance with policies AW5 and AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. No clearance of the existing school garden area shall commence until a Method Statement for the translocation of reptiles has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The site clearance shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To afford protection to animal species in accordance with policies AW5 and AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.